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GRIMETHORPE

THE Grimethorpe strike has given the Tory press and the Americans a golden opportunity for an indictment of the National Union of Mineworkers and of the Coal Board. Conservative speakers, in their anxiety to throw dirt at the Coal Board, have treated the strikers with a sympathy which contrasts strangely with their attitude while the mines were in private hands. It has already been argued that this local dispute proves that nationalisation has failed, and that there is something radically wrong with the negotiating machinery.

The situation is serious enough without such *ex parte* exaggerations. The irresponsible behaviour of 132 men at one coal face of a single pit has threatened the production of the whole South Yorkshire coalfield and the success of the five-day week. How has this happened?

When the five-day week was introduced, it was made clear to the miners that the loss of production, owing to the cessation of Saturday working, must be made up by increased output during the reduced hours. This meant in many pits a re-assessment and stepping up of tasks, and this has duly been proceeding in every coalfield. In South Yorkshire 42 re-assessments had been successfully negotiated before the strike.

Then a dispute arose about one coalface at Grimethorpe, a colliery with a long record of unofficial strikes. The management proposed an increase of the stint by one yard. The men appealed, and the appeal was considered by a district committee consisting of two working miners and an official who had spent his life at the coalface. The committee decided on an increase of two feet, and the Grimethorpe Miners' Lodge approved the decision.

One shift was worked on the new basis. The second shift struck, and they were followed by the men in the adjacent mine, who had been under the same management before nationalisation and had been used to striking together. Thence the epidemic spread to other mines in the area. The weather was fine, the Barnsley Feast was on and the gentry were holidaying at the York and Doncaster race meetings.

Next the press got to work. Isolated mining villages were thronged by journalists and cameramen. The miners' meetings were conducted under the glare of world publicity. Men who do a dirty and dangerous job with little public attention were suddenly famous—because they were on strike. The effect was inevitable. An issue which could have been settled in private became almost insoluble in the new atmosphere of political melodrama.

But all this does not explain the men's attitude. Though they would certainly vote Labour at an election, they have talked wildly as though they care nothing for the Union, the Coal Board or the Government. The truth is they have no clear political faith, either Socialist or Communist. Indeed, South Yorkshire is an area where Communist influence is negligible. All they believe in is the comradeship of the mining community, and the right of the miner to enjoy himself and to be as irresponsible as other people. For generations miners have spontaneously taken up the cudgels on behalf of fellow-miners with a raw deal from the bosses.

Grimethorpe has two obvious lessons for the Government. First, that to step up production will fail unless it is accompanied by incessant and thorough political education. The Labour Party has enjoyed a political monopoly in these Yorkshire villages for years. It has used it to fan the disgruntlement against the bosses, but it has obviously failed to instil any positive sense of Socialist responsibility. If men who have been social outcasts all their lives, and have been deprived of the opportunity both for leisure and for adult education, are suddenly given the chance to coerce the community, it is only too probable that a few of them will misuse their power. Once this happens, the miners' main virtue—his comradeship—becomes his vice.

It was always realised that the attempt to compress six days' work into five—and that is what the five-day week means—was bound to be dangerous under a Coal Board which has not had time to reorganise the management and change the atmosphere of the industry. Under constant pressure from the Cabinet to step up production, the Board and the Union may well have moved faster than they would have wished. We have reason to believe that Mr. Bevin assured Mr. Clayton, while he was in London, that he could impose an 8-hour day on the industry. Indeed, at Southport, he and Mr. Attlee put this to the miners privately. Mr. Horner had little difficulty in demonstrating the unreality of the proposals. The second lesson of Grimethorpe is that, to accede to American pressure and simply to put on the screw, is to court disaster.

But in recording this fact, it is essential to see the strike in proportion, and to remember that at countless coalfaces all over the country, miners are accepting new and increased tasks with good will if not with enthusiasm. They would be helped in their work if the world press would pay some attention to the coalfields which have no "news value" because they are doing their job.

Mr. Bevin and the Jews

The story of the Exodus is now finished. For nine weeks it has held the world headlines and brought Britain into contempt in every civilized country. It is no secret that the whole affair began with Mr. Bevin's personal initiative and has been conducted by him against the advice of the Palestine High Commissioner and the feeble protests of his colleagues in the Cabinet. Convinced that he is fighting a world-conspiracy, he is doing his best to create one: and he is almost as much the slave of his emotions as the crazy Stern Gang terrorists who last week tried to "bomb" London. At Margate the Foreign Secretary explained to the Labour Party that in his view the Jews are at war with the Gentile world. By this emotional attitude he has fomented anti-Semitism in this country and given an excuse for terrorism in Palestine. We must hope that the Cabinet as a whole appreciate the unhappy results of Mr. Bevin's Palestine policy and that they will seize the chance which the United Nations' report gives us of ending it.

Cripps to Move

The noble Lords have not been the only people this week to have their curiosity as to the latest moves in the economic crisis left unsatisfied. The new figure on the London stage, Mr. Snyder of the U.S. Treasury, has not been communicative. Clearly the World Bank, for whose meeting he is here, cannot take the place of a Marshall Plan agency as an instrument for European relief. As its vice-president, Mr. Garner, has just emphasised, its function is to provide capital, at a fairly high rate of interest and on good security, for productive purposes, among which (according to the current interpretation of the Bank's Charter) the consumption of food is not included. Reports from Washington say that the Senate Appropriations Committee will have an emergency meeting on September 20 to consider the implications of a Note from Britain intimating inability to continue to pay her share of the cost of occupation of the joint Anglo-American zone of Western Germany. This affects the U.S. Treasury directly, and Mr. Snyder will presumably give some indication to the British Government how far he is willing to shoulder a larger proportion of the cost of "Bizonia." Whether he intends to give the Cabinet his advice on the British crisis in more general terms is a matter for speculation. At its meeting on Tuesday the Cabinet is understood to have been engaged mainly in giving its final approval to the plan, which Sir Stafford Cripps will announce after we go to press, for raising the level of British exports to 160 per cent. of the 1938 volume. By all accounts Sir Stafford intends to give another turn of the screw on the British consumer; higher export quotas are to be required from various industries, and their fulfilment is to be ensured by a stricter allocation of fuel and raw materials. Controls of this type are easy to work in industries whose intake consists of one or two staples; but it remains to be seen how the plan will cope with concerns whose raw materials consist of a large number of different semi-manufactured components entering partly into the export and partly into the home trade.

Wavering in Washington

Washington continues to waver between the opinion that Europe will last through till the spring or that it may die in the night. The mood during the past week has been one of sudden despair. Europe is "hanging on the ropes," said a State Department broadcast, and Under-Secretary Lovett, in the absence of the President and Mr. Marshall at Rio, has warned the country that the future of Europe will be decided before the Marshall plan can come into operation. This means that the three major American lines of policy have collapsed. The Clayton plan for prosperity by Cobdenism nearly killed the patient; the Truman plan for arranging the European crisis to fit Congressional holidays is now obviously bunk, and the Marshall plan for a careful investment of dollars in European production is proving insufficiently prompt and drastic. America is now left without any policy for the economic crisis in Europe, and, in the absence of Congress, without the machinery to implement a policy. The question arises whether a sufficient sense of urgency can be created to enable a policy to be improvised. The facts on European economy assembled by the Paris conference have shocked Mr. Clayton and Mr. Lewis Douglas into something not far from panic; the Congressional Committees in Europe are confused between the sombre mood of officials and the general apathy of the public; Big Business is worried at the sharp drop in exports, but the general public hopes this may presage a drop in record prices; Senator Taft sees no basis of action for a special session of Congress; Mr. Stassen declares that the price of dollars must be the abandonment of Socialist planning; and Senator Vandenberg says that the whole issue is up to Mr. Truman. Meanwhile the President—who alone can initiate action—is taking a fortnight's cruise in a battleship.

The New Empire Crusader

The Foreign Secretary's determination at Southport to prove that he—unlike others in Downing Street?—had a mind of his own, replete with bold ideas, has involved him in difficulties. His casual suggestion that the United States should redistribute over the world the gold at Fort Knox (as if it would not immediately return there in payment for the U.S. export surplus!) has had a violently hostile reception in the American press. His other proposal, for an Empire Customs union, has also been frowned on in Washington as "discriminatory" against American interests, and has evoked little enthusiasm with the Commonwealth. Apart from the fact that the Colonies are largely dependent on Customs revenue, Canada is much too closely integrated with the economy of the United States to dream of becoming a member of an exclusive Empire club. Moreover, spokesmen of Australia and New Zealand have lost no time in making it clear that, though they appreciate the advantages of Imperial preferences, they have no intention of exposing their nascent industries to competition from duty-free British manufacturers. Before parading his personal panaceas at the Trades Union Congress, Mr. Bevin would have done well to reflect for a moment that under half of Britain's exports find a market within the Empire, and that in a tariff-fenced Commonwealth the Dominions would be hard put to it to find outlets for their produce.

Loyalty at Southport

If Mr. Bevin's *obiter dicta* were somewhat of a "flop" overseas, there could be no doubt that his exuberant personality dominated the Trades Union Congress. After his speech, an amendment to the General Council's report calling for a more drastic reduction of the Services was actually withdrawn; and, after this initial retreat by the Left wing, the platform had little difficulty in securing what amounted to a blanket vote of confidence. The Congress insisted on a "reference back" of the paragraph in the report dealing with Fascist activities in this country: delegates were obviously concerned at the growth of anti-Semitic propaganda and were determined that the Council should press the Government to take legislative action. With this exception, however, debates on resolution after resolution submitted by the Left resulted in the issue being remitted to the General Council. Mr. Bevin's foreign policy received a general endorsement, and a motion calling for renewal of trade negotiations with the U.S.S.R. in order to release Britain from "the dollar grip" was heavily defeated. A similar fate overtook resolutions demanding a stronger British policy against dictatorship in Greece and Spain. Though the minority was vocal and critical, it never succeeded in mobilising more than three million "card" votes against four million. The general inclination at Southport was obviously to do nothing to embarrass the Government in the middle of the economic crisis. Once again, as at Margate, a demonstration of unquestioning loyalty was achieved at the expense of evading or postponing the crucial issues.

Big Business Has Its Say

Contrary to expectations, the T.U.C. rejected, by 4,857,000 votes to 2,360,000, a resolution put forward by the Foundry Workers' Union calling on the Government to give "urgent attention" to nationalising the steel industry. It was announced from the platform that the Minister of Supply had given an assurance that proposals would be brought forward in the lifetime of the present Parliament for "the transfer of the appropriate sections of the industry to public ownership"; and on this basis it was left. If the Cabinet interprets this decision as a mandate to omit a Steel Bill from the next King's Speech, there will doubtless be rejoicing in Steel House and in the Federation of British Industries. But the F.B.I., whose spokesmen had an "appreciative" reception by Mr. Herbert Morrison last Friday, is demanding considerably more than the mere reprieve of private enterprise in the steel industry. The main heads of the policy put forward by Big Business are that there should be immediate resumption of British coal exports and a cut of £450,000,000 in capital expenditure. The idea behind resuming coal exports is evidently that it is desirable to create a moderate amount of what is now politely termed "under-employment" in order to bring about redistribution of labour, and—we should hazard a guess—acceptance of lower wages. The demand for a reduction of capital expenditure is highly reminiscent of the attitude of the May Committee in 1931; the F.B.I. is as tenacious as the Tory front bench in its grip on policies which bitter experience has discredited. It is arguable that the capital programme should be pared of some marginal projects which might be postponed without loss to the country's productive efficiency. But indiscriminate wielding of an economy axe would be the most short-sighted policy conceivable. The housing programme may have to be re-shaped in order to make a greater contribution to the mobility of labour in directions where it is most required, but the total programme certainly cannot be reduced. As for capital expenditure in industry, if we are going to weather the crisis, modernisation of plant shou'd be a first priority.

Petrol and the Public

If it indeed be the case that we have to import over half our oil from dollar sources because we lack sufficient tankers and refining capacity to enable us to rely on the ample supplies of crude "sterling" oil available in the Middle East, then there must be drastic reduction in this country's consumption of petrol. But the more the edict abolishing the basic petrol ration from October 1st is considered, the more doubtful it seems whether the axe has fallen on the right tree. To some extent it is arguable that basic petrol has been used for "luxury" purposes. Londoners and citizens of other large towns undoubtedly drive into the country at week-ends for pleasure. They may protest that it is hard that they should be denied this healthy recreation for their families when no similar ban is imposed on the smoker, the drinker, or the frequenter of horse-races or dog-tracks. But they cannot prove absolute inability to forgo their week-end outing. For many people, however—and their ranks extend far beyond the Marxist conception of the bourgeoisie—the small car or the motor bicycle is a means of transport (to work-place, to shops, or to take children to school) whose loss will lead to a waste of time and energy, and a sense of infuriated frustration, quite out of proportion to the amount of dollars saved. And how many dollars will be saved? Applications for enlarged allotments of Supplementary and Essential petrol will pour into the offices of the regional Fuel Controllers. Taking into account the forthcoming winter cuts in public transport, it will be difficult to refuse all of these demands if applicants are to be treated at all reasonably. (Many people, it must be remembered, have "inaccessible" homes simply because they cannot find any others.) We shall be surprised if the next saving of petrol amounts to £3 millions a year. In a leading article last week we stated that the Services use £13 million pounds' worth of petrol annually. This was an error: the figure which we gave relates to the Army only; and the total consumption by the Forces amounts to roughly £32 millions this year. If it was deemed impossible to bring about retrenchment in private motor consumption without suppressing the basic ration—France, it may be noted, has banned the use of cars with an engine capacity exceeding 2 litres—why not make twice as big a saving as now seems likely by a 20 per cent. cut in Service petrol?

JAPAN IN THE FAR EAST

THE coming Washington Conference on Japan must deal with problems very similar to those that face the Foreign Ministers in November in relation to the future of Germany. In both cases America has plans for the swift rehabilitation of the ex-enemy country under American control and according to the American pattern; in both cases these plans are opposed by Russia and feared by others, including Britain, because they neglect the safety and interests of smaller countries and sharpen the division of the world into two hostile camps. In both cases the main issue will be the level of industry to be permitted to yesterday's aggressor. How far can Germany and Japan be "rehabilitated" to take their place in the world economy without the risk that they will be in a position to precipitate another world war by playing off the Great Powers against each other? This problem was theoretically soluble only on the assumption that the wartime alliance had continued into the post-war world. If every move is judged in terms of atomic strategy, then no solution exists. In that case the ex-enemies are merely potential allies in a third world war, and their contribution to a hungry world is reduced to an insignificant clause under "any other business."

This, the basic issue, is not immediately obvious in the preliminary proposals for a Japanese settlement which have been reached by the Commonwealth Powers in the Conference which has just ended at Canberra. Their programme outlines the kind of Treaty the British Commonwealth hopes to see in operation in Japan within the next year. If we can judge by recent statements of General MacArthur and pointers in the American press, they are in broad agreement with American policy. The chief provisions are to set up a "supervisory commission" in Japan and maintain it there until such time as it is convinced that the Japanese civil Government is able and willing to fulfil the treaty conditions. This Allied Commission (working on the basis of a "two-thirds majority") may encourage the development of a democratic peace-loving Japan which has neither the desire nor the ability to threaten other nations. It will see to it that fundamental human rights (including freedom of association) are recognised; it will prohibit key war industries and enforce the payment of reparations, the return of looted property to its owners, and the payment of occupation costs. It will restrict Japanese territory to the four main islands and some small islands that were agreed upon at Yalta. Finally, it will grant loans to Japan based on her gold and silver holdings. In offering these proposals for discussion at Washington by the eleven Powers the Canberra delegates hope that talks on the treaty with Japan will be held concurrently with this month's meeting of the General Assembly. There was general agreement that if the worst happened and the U.S.S.R. refused to attend except on the basis of Four-Power discussions, this should not be allowed to delay matters.

The Canberra Conference report was naturally only the outline of decisions taken, but as Dr. Evatt had already had preliminary discussions with General MacArthur, we can assume that the Conference had in mind the special demands which America may make before the Peace Conference, both on economic and on strategic questions. In both cases America has already enjoyed what has amounted to a monopolistic position. Japanese trade has developed under the supervision of General MacArthur's headquarters in Tokio. The South Pacific Islands have been administered by the American Navy authorities, and it is rumoured that she will ask for the occupation of the Ryuku and Bonin Islands, which would give her a strategic inner ring as important as the outer ring of islands she already possesses in the South Pacific.

It is in the light of these American plans that we must understand the Soviet attitude to the Conference. Russia's calculations are no doubt similar to those that decided her to withdraw from the Marshall discussions in Paris. Knowing that America is in any case in a position to have her own way at the Conference, the U.S.S.R. may prefer not again to accept the humiliation of defeat and isolation, but to concentrate on rebuilding her own Socialist part of the world in the belief that a slump is coming in America and that world capitalism will proceed from catastrophe to catastrophe until a point is reached when the Soviet Union can play a decisive role. The argument is dangerous, since it assumes that capitalism will be weakened by an American slump and not driven by it to Fascism and aggression. The Socialist Governments of the British Commonwealth at Canberra were probably more realistic when they urged in friendly terms the importance of Russia in the Japanese settlement and expressed the hope that the U.S.S.R. would after all see fit to come to Washington. If the U.S.S.R. is absent it will be the spectre of the third world war that will occupy the empty chair.

In his concluding speech Dr. Evatt showed that he understood that something more than the strategic relations of the Great Powers were involved in the Washington Conference. He said that Japan's future was not an isolated problem. The solution could lie in a comprehensive international effort to raise the standard of welfare throughout Southern and Eastern Asia and the Pacific. "Our efforts to establish international order will be held back if we do not speedily make peace and conclude settlements which will form the basis for world recovery." So far, so good. But any plans to raise the standards of welfare in South and Eastern Asia are merely Utopian until solutions are found for the four urgent problems of China, Indonesia, Indo-China and Korea. Indo-China and Indonesia are the scene of an old-fashioned type of colonial war; in each of them settlement is possible when the French and Dutch face the facts of nationalism in South-East Asia as frankly as the British have done in India and Burma. In China, General Wedemeyer, sent on a fact-finding commission, has come to conclusions similar to those of Mr. Marshall nearly two years ago. He tells the Chinese Communists not to use force to support their ideology, and rebukes the Nanking Government for "blaming outside influences and seeking outside assistance instead of seeking solutions of the problems presented." Only drastic and far-reaching economic reforms are any good; "military force in itself will not eliminate Communism." In the fourth dispute, in Korea, there is still stalemate on the joint American-Soviet Commission. No agreement is reached on the proposal for a united provisional government, because the Americans and Russians each accuse the other of sponsoring ideologically hostile groups. The Russians have now rejected the United States' suggestion of a conference of America, Russia, China and Britain in Washington.

All these problems impinge on the discussions for a peace treaty with Japan, although they will not be on the agenda. And, if they were, the discussion could at best be one-sided, since only one of the protagonists would be present in the case of Indonesia, Indo-china and China. Thus the logic of Dr. Evatt's statement would seem to be the participation of all those countries which played a part in Japan's defeat, which merit a share in reparations and which are needed in any effective settlement in the Far East. The Far East Conference in Washington will be unrealistic unless it seeks the views of the Governments of Indonesia, the Viet Nam, the Chinese Communists and people of Korea, both to the north and south of the 38th parallel. How, otherwise, can there be any serious approach to the problems of economic reconstruction in the Pacific? It is obvious that the Colonial Powers will resist such consultations on the ground that these Governments are not legally "recognised," just as the Dutch did, with the support of Britain, France and Belgium, when the Security Council wished to hear the Indonesians put their case. But the Council disregarded this disingenuous formalism. Unless the Peace Conference does the same, it will be convicted of fiddling whilst Asia disintegrates.

FRANCE AND BRITAIN

ANGLO-FRENCH relations, after the eloquent formalities of the Dunkirk ceremony last spring, and the brief get-together for the Harvard speech, are now as bad as ever. We are back at the usual recriminations. The French, we say, are impossible about the Ruhr; so we must go ahead with the Americans despite Bidault's objections. Anyway, the Government and the franc are both so unstable that we cannot afford to be linked with them.

The French reply is equally emphatic. As one French politician put it to me last week, "But you have ceased to make even the pretence of having a view of your own. In the discussions on the level of German industry, your representatives might at least have shown one difference of inflection from the Americans. But they seemed too tired to resist—almost indifferent." And an alert young Communist editor drew his obvious moral, "We had a bad patch last July. But now things are going just as we predicted, except that the Americans surprised us by not even attempting to conceal their intentions. They let us know that they regard the German industrialists as more reliable allies than France. So much for your Marshall plan. There will be confusion in France this winter, and we can expect to profit by it."

It is not difficult to see why the French Communists have suddenly recovered heart. The internal situation grows worse month by month. The controlled economy of a government headed by Socialists is now an empty mockery; and the frantic invocations to show a discipline like the British have no effect on a people which has just experienced the doubling of the price and the halving of the ration of bread. Everyone knows that as a result of putting the price of maize higher than that of wheat, the peasants fed the wheat to their livestock, and that this summer's terrible drought has made the position still more desperate. But what is to be done in a country where the Food Ministry reckons that half the population is directly or indirectly concerned with the black market, while the other half has to live on its rations? The traditional conflict of town and country has now become a pre-revolutionary deadlock in which the working class is forced down to the level of a Marxist proletariat—and votes Communist accordingly. Meanwhile the Socialist Party commits slow hara-kiri "for the sake of the nation"; and the "democratic planning," for which it is held responsible, becomes a synonym for a moral chaos in which the rich grow richer and the poor poorer. French public morality, never very strong and undermined by years of Vichy, has now almost ceased to exist.

In such a situation, and despite all evidence to the contrary, France still hopes that Britain will see reason. There is a self-deprecatory admiration for the civic discipline with which Britain accepts the cuts. Even more significant, the memory of 1940–41, when Britain spoke and fought for Europe, has been re-awakened, and I was amazed to be told in Paris by a most reliable British observer that the Churchill offer of 1940, so scoffed at when it was made, would now meet with a response in all circles outside the Communists. The French know that they can only be saved by a *deus ex machina*, and the vast majority of them would prefer a British to an American or Russian divinity. Hence the extraordinary violence of their feelings about the British conduct at the recent tri-partite meeting on Germany.

Here, indeed, is an inexplicable contradiction. Britain and France are bound together by closer ties than ever before in their history. France won the first, as Britain won the second, World

War at a cost far beyond her strength. Each in isolation and relying only on its Empire, is incapable of an independent policy; each, working alone, is strategically indefensible against both East and West. Yet working together they could still form a policy to direct American assistance into constructive channels instead of leaving Western Europe as a passive and divided recipient of anti-Bolshevik (or Bolshevik) aid. Since this is possible and vitally to the interests of both peoples, why does it not happen?

The reason usually given in this country is the internal French situation, which I have already sketched. No French Government is capable of an initiative of any kind. The Cabinet does not rule: it reacts feebly or violently according to the pressure applied. All this is true enough. The French political crisis is far more severe than our own. Indeed it is insoluble in terms of the present balance of parties, which prevents the existence of a French Government, in our sense of the word government.

But is this a sufficient justification for British isolationism? In dismissing France as an incurable schizophrene, who must be made to toe the Anglo-American line, are we not making our own crisis as insoluble as the French? Three weeks wandering in France, Switzerland and Austria gave me an opportunity to look at Britain from outside, and to see us as our fellow-Europeans see us. I found abounding good will, but an increased bewilderment at our policy.

"Social democracy is immolating itself on the altar of national sovereignty," said a Swiss Socialist in Zurich. We had been discussing Mr. Bevin's policy in Palestine, and seeking to discover how a Labour Foreign Secretary could be driven to such extremities. "French Socialists in Indo-China and British Socialists in Palestine are both suffering from the same disease. To save something of their national greatness they are sacrificing principle and morality itself. The strong Imperialist can afford to be moral, sometimes; the weak Socialist, trying to defend imperial interests, is compelled by circumstances to adopt strong-arm methods and gradually destroys both the Empire and his Socialism too".

There is more in this than we like to admit. Both of us are trying to sustain something of an imperial past. But the French have lost so much already that they are ready to consider the sacrifice of national sovereignty. We are not. Mr. Bevin would regard it as unpatriotic to admit that we need France as much as France needs us, or that our economic problems are insoluble in terms of a national trade balance. So the deeper our crisis grows, the more insular we become; the more obvious our need for union with Western Europe, the more obstinately we seek for a British Empire solution; and with a contemptuous indifference dismiss France as "hopeless."

In fact this is a superficial judgment. Though the immediate symptoms in France are much more acute than ours, the crisis is not nearly so fundamental. In normal times France can feed herself, and it is theoretically possible to foresee how her exports could balance her imports. It may be very difficult to work the Monnet Plan, but at least it exists. If the political deadlock could once be broken, if the outside aid could be used sensibly instead of leaking into the morass of the black market, then a national plan could be enforced, and French recovery achieved within a few years.

Our position is exactly the reverse. We still enjoy a political stability and public morality which permit the Cabinet to impose, without undue difficulty, any cuts which it chooses. But we have no plan. This is not because the Cabinet does not want one, or because its officials are incompetent, but because an island, wholly dependent on foreign trade, cannot make a national plan. So long as we remain an insular economic unit, and try to balance our national imports against national exports, we cannot bridge the gap. We could certainly reduce it by economies and bilateral arrangements, and we must seek to do so. But the ugly fact remains that no economist can show the way to make the British Isles a sound business concern, in a world where, when American prices rise, we cannot afford imports, and when they slump, our export markets vanish. If the French political deadlock is insoluble, our economic deadlock is no less so. Neither can be resolved within the framework of the nation state.

But there remains this difference, that we refuse to admit it, while the French know they are licked. Even the Communists, though they talk of confusion next winter, remember uneasily the similar talk among German Communists in the winter of 1932. Psychologically France is ready for any proposals, however revolutionary, for Western European union. There are times when a belief in miracles becomes realism. In France such a time has arrived.

But on this side of the Channel—as so often happens in Anglo-French relations—the mood is different. Our political stability conceals the extent of our economic peril. Moreover, since we are in no danger of "going Communist", the Cabinet can still hope to evade the issue by means of extensive American aid. With a gradually declining standard of living, and a steady deterioration in public morality, we can struggle on for a few years—if the Americans are reasonably generous—keeping up appearances ever more shabbily and looking with disdain at the antics of the foreigners across the Channel.

In winding up the most recent debate on the economic crisis, Sir Stafford Cripps produced unanswerable arguments to prove that the sixteen nations of Western Europe cannot survive in isolation from each other against the preponderant industrial strength of the U.S.A. What we refuse to admit is that this applies much more urgently to Britain than to all the rest. We need Europe much more than she needs us, from the strictly economic point of view. Yet by equating Socialism with nationalisation we fool ourselves with the idea that internal reconstruction, combined with a manipulation of foreign trade, can see us through. But can it? Or does Britain after all, just as much as France, need a European plan to make her national plan a reality, and a European union to save her political independence? Without it, France will probably founder first; but our need, though not so obvious now, is just as great. In France the hour has struck. But the clocks on this side of the Channel seem to be set not to European, but to American time.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

A LONDON DIARY

RUMOURS of a Cabinet reconstruction leave me cold. A mere reshuffle is all that seems possible in the circumstances, and its effect would wear off in a few days. The lack of a coherent policy has been largely due to the strength of Departmental Ministers at the periphery, and the weakness at the centre. Of the three Ministers without Departmental responsibility, who should be co-ordinating policy, Herbert Morrison, after his illness, seems to have become an elder statesman, while Arthur Greenwood and Lord Inman count for nothing. By replacing these latter two with men of first-rate ability, the Prime Minister should theoretically be able to strengthen his inner Cabinet. He might, for instance, induce a really notable national figure, like Lord Louis Mountbatten, to join his team. That, however, would only make a difference if the new Minister were strong enough to alter the whole balance of power in the Cabinet, i.e., to end its domination by Ernest Bevin. As long as Ernest Bevin bestrides this Government, it will not very much matter what petty men walk under his huge legs. This makes me sceptical about all the stories of the Prime Minister's imminent retirement. Bevin and Attlee suit each other perfectly. The P.M. knows that the Foreign Secretary can be relied on, by a threat of resignation, to silence any awkward opposition, and by two speeches a year to control the T.U.C. and the Labour Party. The Foreign Secretary is well content to serve under "the little man with the quiet voice"—like a Regimental Sergeant-Major whose Colonel is well under control. Last July, quite a different sort of reconstruction seemed possible—the elimination of the Left. Both Aneurin Bevan and John Strachey had threatened to resign if iron and steel were not nationalised in the next session, and a test of strength had developed between them and Herbert Morrison, who had committed himself the other way. If Nye Bevan were to resign, the Cabinet would become explicitly Right-wing, and an open struggle would develop between it and the Left opposition on the back benches. In the end this might split the Party and bring the Government down. But I gather that there is now a good chance of avoiding this open cleavage. In that case, any Cabinet reconstruction this autumn is likely to leave the balance of power unchanged, with Ernest Bevin in the ascendant, and Nye Bevan inside the Cabinet and biding his time.

* * *

It has happened before. Given a crisis, officials develop an idiotic xenophobia in this usually decent and hospitable country. The need for increased vigilance at the Customs has given an excuse for what Mr. O. H. Bonham-Carter in *The Times* has quite rightly called petty tyranny. His complaint was that his wife had to give up her engagement ring before she went to Paris. In another case that came to my attention an Englishman going abroad was allowed to take his wrist watch because it was not valuable, but he was sternly told that his gold signet ring, which had not been off his finger for forty years, must be left behind. The official was baffled when he was asked whether gold studs must also be left behind. No instructions about studs had yet come through. Angry by this time, the unfortunate victim of this bureaucratic silliness inquired whether he might take his gold tooth-filling with him? Travellers reaching England are also subjected to extraordinary inquisitions when they disembark. The most surprising story was that of the ten Polish Socialists who came here as guests of the Fabian Society—to which, by the way, many members of the Government have belonged or still belong. The officials, however, knew nothing of the Fabians. Imagining them to be Bolsheviks they held up the Poles so long at the port that they were late for their conference. Another case occurred last week. A Czech lady, who happened to be a civil servant in Prague, was asked on her arrival here why she had come to England, what she was going to live on while here, what her politics were, and many other questions which no Czech official ever asks a British traveller who arrives in that still free and democratic country. Coupled with this business of landing the Jews in Germany, people on the Continent are beginning to say that Britain is "going National-Socialist." There is more strength in the accusation than most of us care to admit, but this outbreak of bureaucratic influenza should be checked by ridicule. Mr. Chuter Ede is a sensible man and he will presumably see that the first effect of pushing things to these extremes is increased smuggling, and the next the consequent bribery and corruption. That our reaction to a dollar crisis should be to prevent ordinary intercourse with our near neighbours on the Continent is particularly ironic when we have as Foreign Secretary a man who said that the first object of his policy was to abolish passports. What he has done is to abolish the need of them!

* * *

After talking to a friend who has recently been in Bulgaria, and after myself reading a good deal of the evidence of the Petkov trial, I have reached several tentative conclusions. The defending counsel was given full scope and was able to show that the evidence against Petkov was very thin, but the verdict had probably been decided before the trial was held; everyone knew that the point

was not so much to condemn Petkov as to discredit the agrarian party and so defeat the plot which usage would demand as soon as Russian troops are withdrawn from the country. A *coup d'état* has been the normal method of changing the government in Bulgaria. Stamboliski's regime (1919–23) was ended by violence and a peculiarly bloody reign of terror under IMRO which lasted until the Georgiev *coup d'état* of 1934; the new regime was liquidated by King Boris, whose police State was in its turn upset during the war by a quite unusually brilliant series of assassinations, including that of Boris himself. Evidence that a new conspiracy is now on the way is to be found in the notorious intrigues of old Balkan leaders in Washington which may or may not be linked up with the "Military Union" and the "Neutral Officers" whose activities were revealed at Petkov's trial. But the evidence that Petkov was actively engaged in any such murder conspiracy seems slight and suspect; and one would reject it on general grounds of improbability. Perhaps the most fishy part of the evidence on which he was condemned to death is that those who gave the evidence, involving themselves in the conspiracies, were only condemned to terms of imprisonment. I very much hope that the Bulgarian Government will decide not to execute a man who in the days of Resistance had earned so high a reputation.

* * *

I was lucky enough the other day to get hold of the complete text of the United Nations discussion on Indonesia. Why, for goodness sake, should that be "lucky"? Because only two, or at most three, copies of the complete proceedings of any United Nations debate ever reach this country. Which is altogether absurd. Journalists and experts who want to write serious articles and follow the procedure of the United Nations carefully are quite unable to do so, and they are told when they complain that it "costs the earth" to send these big documents over by air, and that the United Nations is already too heavily staffed and can't afford salaries for competent précis writers. All this is both a cause and an effect of the decline in interest in international organisation. This Indonesian discussion, for instance, was as interesting and nearly as important as the famous League debate on Abyssinia in 1935. No one would have guessed from the scraps reported in the press that this discussion involved not only the future of South-East Asia but the whole issue of whether colonial empires are transformed in peace or bloodshed. I did not know, for instance, until I read the verbatim account, that Van Kleffens, for the Dutch, had tried to deny the existence of the Indonesian Government, which has been *de facto* recognised by the Dutch, or that the British took no serious part in this debate, while Dr. Sjahrir, for the Indonesians, was powerfully backed up, not only by Mr. Gromyko, but also by the delegates of Australia and Colombia.

* * *

On Sunday for the first time for many years I walked on the Downs behind Rottingdean. I noticed several things. Building up the sides and on the top of the Downs has been successfully stopped. But someone, I am not sure who, has fenced in large tracts of open Down, even on occasion putting barbed wire across well-worn footpaths. Wide acres have gone back to prairie. In places I walked knee-deep in dying thistles, with the down, like snow, coming over my shoes. And for many miles I saw no sheep. I am told that these lamentable changes are partly due to the havoc wrought by tanks, which destroyed the springy turf and the small flowers which are the peculiar joy of Downland walking, and partly to the pre-war discovery of farmers that cattle paid better than South Down mutton. I doubt if this was ever good economy, and with a shilling's worth of overseas meat a head per week, it seems to me really scandalous that this unique and glorious pasturage should not be the happy feeding ground of thousands of comfortable fat sheep.

CRITIC

THE KNIGHT AND THE DRAGON

(A Spenserian Fragment)

The National Coal Board is looking for a motto.
—News item.

A Coal Board knight was pricking round the pit,
  Coal King of Arms in Labour chivalry,
Full armed upon his steed, he feared no whit
  The dragon of the mining industry;
  His coat embossed with goodly heraldry,
Full opencast his knightly countenance,
  The champion drew the darksome cavern nigh,
The vesting pennon dangling from his lance,
The which the surly dragon seemed to eye askance.

  The figure Five was blazoned on his shield,
    Denoting five days' work with two days' rest,
  And miners *couchant* on a *sable* field;
    And *argent* rose-bowl proper formed his crest,
    (The Coal Board's prize for mines that did
      the best)
  With *cubit* arm erect, and miner's pick,
    And thus accoutred, on his valiant quest,
  Right well he persevered through thin and thick,
And ever he advanced, yet ever seemed to stick.

His goodly arms, symbolic in design
  Were all complete except for one device
For which he canvassed voting from the mine,
  (Riding as one who skateth on thin ice)
  He sought the hostage dragon to entice
With "Follow Me!" "By hook or crook!" "I sprint!"
  "Work conquers all!" or "Equal Sacrifice!"
"Strike while the iron is hot!" or "Stint by stint!"
Whereat the miners jeered with taunts too rude to print.

Rebuffed by churlish hordes from underground,
  His helm knocked slantwise by a piece of coal,
Eftsoon he hied him to the Table Round,
  Whereon the knightly Coal Board took control,
  And firmly writ beneath the silver bowl,
Whether the rampant dragon would or no,
  Their own device on the heraldic scroll.
The knight, refreshed, then trotted back to show
Inscribed upon his shield "*Pro Bono Publico!*"

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to R. F. Jones.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

"I'm sure numerous readers of the *Echo* would get quite a kick last Friday night on reading about the four-inch caterpillar sent to you from Birkenhead, plus the four-foot jellyfish found on Prestatyn shore.

"News of this nature stirs the imagination, and helps to counteract the depressing news about the crisis."—Letter, *Liverpool Echo.*

If there is anyone who thinks that our destiny lies in shutting ourselves up in these islands, let him read the Bible. We were not given the Empire for nothing.—Letter, *Daily Telegraph.*

Queen Diana Hine, Southend's 23-year-old red-headed choice for the Carnival Week throne, will perform her first public ceremony on Saturday morning, when—with the deputy Queen, Miss Barbara Pearce—she drives to Chalkwell Park in Hermann Goering's bullet-proof open tourer for the tiny tots' parade.—*Southend Standard.*

George Harold Stiles Rome, only son of Mr. S. G. Rome and Mrs. Rome, Whatton Lodge, Gullane, East Lothian, and Marjorie Susan Mary Maclachlan of Maclachlan, eldest daughter of the late Maclachlan of Maclachlan and of Mrs. Maclachlan of Maclachlan, Castle Lachlan, Strathlachlan, Argyll.—*Weekly Scotsman.*

Ordinary mink coats are still very much in demand in London.... At present a ranch mink coat costs £1500 up, and a wild mink from £2500 up.
—*Evening Standard.*

CLASH OF PLOUGHSHARES

As a result of the Dundee Conference, the British Association has decided to set up a Crisis Committee to consider the ways in which scientists can help Britain in the emergency. Some (even among those who agreed to the Committee) may have thought "And that's that!"—a polite rejoinder to impatient clamour. They are wrong. That is by no means that. Either the Crisis Committee gets to work expeditiously and to some emphatic purpose, or the popular influence which the B.A. re-established so effectively after its eight years break will suffer and the scientific schism, which threatened, will become real. Even the lay-journalists, with their unbidden instinct for "clashes," sensed that the Dundee meeting was something more than an impressive parade of discoveries, or a recital of 200 scientific papers, or the metaphoric conversion of "Swords into Ploughshares," the theme of the conference. They were aware of a classic struggle of attitudes and personalities.

This struggle did not involve, as in the past, merely the ritualists who believe in science pure and undefiled, who maintain that science is the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake regardless of the ends to which it is put, and who vigorously deny that scientists have any social responsibility as functional citizens. This group was not in evidence. Nor were the industrious journalists correct in assuming that the issue was merely a "clash" between the redoubtable personalities of Sir Henry Dale, President of the British Association, and Prof. J. D. Bernal, President of the Association of Scientific Workers. For one thing, Bernal was intervening, not in his A.Sc.W. connection, but as a member of the Council of the B.A., and Dale, in throwing down the gage in his presidential address, was expressing more than a personal attitude to the problem of the diversion of scientists from their perennial duties as researchers and teachers to what he and others probably regard as "quack" doctoring of the country in the crisis.

Sir Henry, in his masterly review of eight crowded years of scientific achievements, with their climax in the atomic bomb, stressed how much of it had been due to co-operative research and intensive team-work unparalleled in the history of science. Acknowledging all that, he voiced a warning:

> The majority of scientists in this country have devoted nearly the whole of their thoughts and efforts during six years or more to practical problems presented to them for rapid solution.... My fear is that we scientists ourselves may find it difficult to shake off the spendthrift habit in research, the policy of trading for quick returns.... The building up of our scientific capital of fundamental knowledge by those who have the creative gift, should have a prior claim over its practical application and over the cultivation of its political influence.

In a postcript to his prepared address, accepting the renewed challenge of the nation's crisis, he asked for trouble by attacking the concept of "Operational Research" as a diversion of scientific effort. He referred to its wartime function as "estimating destructive effects and planning destructive policy" and he questioned its value in dealing with the "immeasurably more complicated and fundamentally different problems of peace." This was directed to those who are urging that scientists should be recalled and regrouped to tackle our economic and production problems by the "shock-troop" methods which were victoriously effective in war. And that involved the new principle of "Operational Research"—the application of scientific method to the study of complex organisational processes (including battles) involving not only measurable facts but human variables.

Operational Research began when Sir Robert Watson-Watt was building up Britain's radar defences. It was found that radar devices, which were efficient and foolproof in the lab. and when they left the workshops, did not respond as they should on location. Physicists went out in the first instance to discover why and to

explain technicalities to the operators. Then they found that their nice tidy calculations were all tangled up by variables—the human factors. Maybe it was the officer who did not get on with his men; maybe it was the delayed mails at a forgotten outpost; maybe it was E.N.S.A., or the "char" in the canteen; maybe it was the Book of Rules which had not adapted itself to radar. From technicalities, the scientists got involved in operations and organisation; and, because "facts are chiels that winna ding," the authorities had to listen and respond.

Top-ranking scientists like Tizard, Blackett, Bernal, Zuckerman and Waddington, in addition to Watson-Watt and A. P. Rowe who had initiated it, sponsored Operational Research in all the Services. In the blitz, I used to find Bernal, the crystallographer, and Zuckerman, the anatomist, plunging around in the smoking, toppling ruins studying Civil Defence at first-hand. Out of that grew the vital knowledge of blast, damage-per-bomb-load, and the relative destructive power of various types of bombs and of concentration of bombers. Their calculated predictions were (or so they seemed to the authorities) uncanny. From their study of the London raids, they calculated the possible effects on a provincial city. Their "paper-exercise" was Coventry, and when the raids occurred later, their predictions of damage and casualties, loss of production, etc., were so accurately confirmed that the authorities were finally convinced. All that experience was turned back upon Germany.

Bernal and Zuckerman also linked up with Mountbatten and Combined Ops. to work on invasion plans. Zuckerman, in the Desert studying bombing, met Tedder and found himself at Eisenhower's headquarters. The story of his assignment to work out the disposition of naval fire-power and air attack to reduce the island strongpoint of Pantellaria without landing troops, is military text-book stuff nowadays; it was the "mock-up" for Sicily and Normandy. And what he did not tell the audience, at the Dundee meeting at which he, Watson-Watt, Prof. Crew (dealing with medical Operational Research), Wansborough-Jones from the Air Ministry, and Bernal explained the methods and their peace-time significance, was how the evidence he amassed and the calculations he produced changed the strategy of our bombing in 1944. At least, they enabled Tedder to prevail in the War Cabinet and military councils, so that area-bombing, beloved of Harris and Churchill, gave way to precision bombing of Germany's transportation and oil systems and the attacks on the French marshalling yards and repair shops which, as Harris himself admits, proved decisive in the invasion of Normandy.

Operational Research intruded not only into Air Force Stations and military and naval organisation but into strategy and tactics at the highest levels. Science was in the War Cabinet, in the Vice-Chiefs of Staffs and Planners' organisation, in the Service Ministries, at the elbows of the Commanders-in-Chief of the three Services in every theatre of war, amassing and analysing facts. The Americans in their official scientific history *Scientists Against Time* pay the highest tribute to Operational Research as one of the great discoveries of the war (and British at that). They quote a decisive minute by Blackett as Chief Scientific Adviser to the Admiralty: "Scientists can encourage numerical thinking on operational matters, and so help to avoid running the war by gusts of emotion. . . ."

Much of Operational Research impinges on the field of the social scientists ("Time-and-Motion" studies for instance are an elementary form of it) and the natural scientists who practised it are the first to admit that. Physicists, biologists, chemists, regardless of their specialisations, found themselves applying scientific method—measurement—to what were essentially problems of social organisation. Many will contend that the field should be left to the social scientists and that, as Dale enjoins, the "natural" cobblers should stick to their lasts. But there is more to it than that: the social scientists are few and diverse in their interests, and have not the prestige of the natural scientists, with their vast material achievements. Economists may resent the interlopers, but they bring fresh minds and laboratory methods to economic and social problems. It would doubtless be congenial to them to accept Dale's injunctions to get back to their laboratories and their class-rooms. But Watson-Watt, at Dundee, while he saluted "The Walled City of the Ivory Towers" as the abiding place of true science, reminded the President that the rocks might be crumbling under the Ivory City, and that science and scientists were not immune from the crisis.

There is no doubt that the vigorous and vital scientists who insisted in 1940 upon being used are ready and anxious to be mobilised again. As Bernal said, it is not a question of being conscripted—no one has ever suggested such a thing—but of a desperate and irresistible urge in the scientists to get to grips with the crisis in ways in which they think they know how. The dilemma is real; so is the division of attitude. Dale is right when he says that it is essential, if Britain is to keep in the forefront of science, that creative minds must get back to research. So is Watson-Watt when he says that the foundations of our research programme (now £80,000,000 a year) are threatened by a crisis which is common to all. We have to face it—as the B.A. Crisis Committee must do urgently—that the war is still on. But now it is a war in which the weapons are not swords but ploughshares.

RITCHIE CALDER

DAGONET : POET OF THE PEOPLE

WHAT must be (among men) the most familiar line of verse in the English language has found no place in the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Aboard ship, in barracks, factory, field, pub, club, and probably in both Houses of Parliament, there can be few men who would fail to supply, on demand, a version of the poem beginning, "It is Christmas Day in the Workhouse." Some may recall cherishable lines by the same poet:

> Billy's dead, and gone to glory—so is Billy's sister Nell. . . .

or

> Been out in the lifeboat often? Ay, ay, sir, oft enough. . . .

or:

> I'd rather be that drowned harlot than the beautiful Countess May. . . .

Suddenly declaimed in desperate circumstances these lines have had all the effect of the old song of Percy and Douglas that moved Sir Philip Sidney's heart more than did a trumpet. Nothing from Shakespeare or Milton could have been half as efficacious. It is not to the grand old masters, or to the young unhopefuls, that weary warriors have recourse for refreshment or encouragement. It is to pedestrian poets, named or anonymous, to unknown geniuses like the man who furnished the unforgettable words to "Colonel Bogey" or the other who first sang "Come back with hair on." Romantic historians' reports notwithstanding, battles are won by parrot-cries, not war-cries. "Any more for the Skylark?" not "For King and Country," led forlorn hopes in the Desert, in Italy, in Burma and Normandy.

The poem "In the Workhouse," of which at least the parody is immortal, was written by George R. Sims, the indefatigable journalist, playwright and versifier, who succeeded Thomas Hood on *Fun* in 1874. He was born on September 2nd, 1847. He died on September 4th, 1922. Once his printed words were as familiar as his features, the luxuriantly haired and bearded features appearing in advertisements for Tatcho. His plays, *The Lights of London* and *The Two Little Vagabonds*—late Victorian melodrama at its best or most acceptable—ran in London and toured the provinces long enough for their titles to become established as stock phrases in the vernacular. Under the pen-name Dagonet he had a column aptly called "Mustard and Cress" in the *Referee* weekly newspaper. For over forty years he maintained its pungency. His book *How the Poor Live* (1883) is credited with having had an ameliorative effect upon legislation.

In 1882, when he published *The Dagonet Ballads*, and for a good twenty years after, the people of England were much addicted to the recitation. Dramatic reciters drew large audiences; no smoking concert was without an elocutionist; and young men and women who could not sing or play the piano were social outcasts if they failed to oblige by "saying a piece." To entertainers in private or public George R. Sims was a boon. His verses were so easily learned, their effects so easily mastered, that many of them are still transmitted orally from father to son, though their authorship is forgotten.

"In the Workhouse" survives chiefly in parody. The pauper with a face as bold as brass who declares "We don't want your Christmas pudding" is not in the original. The Sims poem opens quietly; the workhouse is "a pleasant sight" with garlands of green and holly; the paupers meek and lowly have "Thank'ee kindly, mum's" for the visiting Guardians. Then one of the old men mutters and pushes his plate aside:

> "Great God!" he cries; "but it chokes me!
> For this is the day *she* died."
>
> The guardians gazed in horror,
> The master's face went white;
> "Did a pauper refuse their pudding?"
> "Could their ears believe aright?"

The protesting pauper had, it appears, some cause for complaint. A year ago to the very day his wife had died of starvation. He had asked for bread at the workhouse gate,

> Crying "Food for a dying woman!"
> And the answer came, "Too late."

Driven away with curses, in the street he tore from a mongrel's clutches the crust it was trying to eat. Then back through the filthy by-lanes to the crazy garret he went.

> My heart sank down at the threshold,
> And I paused with a sudden thrill,
> For there in the silv'ry moonlight
> My Nance lay, cold and still.

In the eighteen-eighties the fear of the workhouse was too real for this poem to fail of its intended effect upon people in uneasy circumstances. And death from starvation or exposure was not so uncommon that reference to it could be taken lightly.

> Yes, there, in a land of plenty,
> Lay a loving woman dead,
> Cruelly starved and murdered
> For a loaf of the parish bread.
>
> At yonder gate last Christmas,
> I craved for a human life.
> You, who would feast us paupers,
> *What of my murdered wife!*

Towards making the easier times in which a parody of this poem could flourish among the poor, George R. Sims's contribution was not inconsiderable. He kept resentment fierce in the working-classes. His propaganda for the reform of the Poor Law never slackened.

He was a moral as well as a social critic. He was against "Strong Drink" for those who could not afford it, and he disapproved of wife-beaters and child-neglecters; disapproved too of the "marriage market" and of hypocrisy and narrow-mindedness in all classes. Whatever his theme, he got every ounce of dramatic value out of it; and no sob-sister could have been more efficient. "Billy's Rose" is sickening to read now; once it could reduce men and women to incontinent tears. It relates that Billy "in a vile and filthy alley" lay dying of want and fever, his "pathway to the tomb" cheered by the gentle presence of his loving sister Nell, who told him of a heaven where there would be no drunken fathers and

mothers and no frightening beadles and policemen. "You must die," she whispered. "But I'll come to you, dear brother." Billy before dying expresses a desire to take with him a rose. He had been given a rose at a mission outing, but had never seen one since. Off goes Nelly as "nimbly as a fawn" in her scanty garments, making her way to the "country" of the outing. Alas, the green and lovely meadows are wrapped in cruel snow.

> "Oh, a rose," she moaned, "good Jesus—just a rose to take to Bill!"
> And as she prayed a chariot came thundering down the hill.
> And a lady sat there, toying with a red rose, rare and sweet;
> As she passed she flung it from her, and it fell at Nelly's feet.

Poor Nelly is snowbound. In her absence Billy passes roselessly away from dirt and sin and misery to where God's children play. His sister is found, far out of town, "frozen, with a red rose in her hand." But the children meet in heaven, after all their earthly woes, and Nelly kisses her brother, saying, "Billy, here's your rose."

In Sims's poems, as in plays of the period, people seldom had sense enough to come in out of the snow, though excuse must be found for the woman lost upon the moorland while the tempest howled in fury. Where could she have sought shelter?

> She is blinded by the snowstorm,
> And her limbs are numb with cold;
> In her rags she wraps the baby
> That her weak arms scarce can hold.

Having in desperation despatched the baby to "God's warm bosom," she is charged with murder and promptly sentenced to death. However, God "reprieves" her:

> He who took her burden from her
> Flung her prison gates ajar—
> He perchance lets tortured mothers
> Pass to where their babies are.

In "The Lifeboat" the narrator tells someone whom he consistently calls "sir" of a night when his wife lay a-dying and he himself felt indisposed to answer the call of his captain.

> Then she beckoned me near, and whispered,
> "Go and God's will be done;
> For every lad on that ship, John, is some poor mother's son."

All souls were lost when the wreck went down in a seething whirlpool—all except one.

> I stretched out my hand to seize it. I dragged it aboard, and then
> I stumbled, and struck my forrud, and fell like a log on Ben.

He knew no more until:

> there by the bedside, standin' up and well was my wife,
> And who do ye think was with her? Why Jack, as large as life,

Jack being their wandering boy, miraculously saved from the wreck.

Sims could copy Hood as punster:

> There is a feeling that comes with the daze of joy
> And goes with the knights of grief. . . .

And the Hood of another day:

> Here is a woman pinched and pale,
> Plying her needle for daily bread. . . .

He attempted another kind of *vers de société*, but was always at his best when his subject was "the greatest crime in Christendom—the crime of being poor" (a familiar quotation also unknown to the O.E.D.). He had more heart than art, though he was glad to learn a trick or two from Swinburne:

> Not the languorous lily of soulless sin nor the blood-red rose of lust.

Kipling came too late for him. Perhaps Sims did not come too late for the Kipling who with "Gunga Din," "Tommy," and "Mother o' Mine" took the same road to the sentimental hearts of the people. That road has no poetical travellers to-day. The writer who since Sims has best succeeded with an emotional appeal to the social conscience of the people is J. B. Priestley. His technique is different. It has to be.

Sims left his mark on mathematics as well as on literature. His involuntary contribution to the mnemonics of spherical trigonometry was gratefully received. To remember and visualise "SiMs' TAtChO" is infallibly to recall the formula, "Sine of Middle = product of Tangent of Adjacent = product of Cosines of Opposites." Of that fact his career was a complete demonstration.

DANIEL GEORGE

WHAT'S A FELLOW TO DO?

THE local doctor came and said I was a very sick man. He was not, however, without hope, and continued in the patient and practised vocabulary of the general practitioner, "I have found in similar cases that in such conditions as yours Vitamin A affords considerable relief. If you will give this prescription to your local chemist I am sure you will feel the benefit. At the same time I should advise you to keep away from alcohol in any form."

The lady who presides over the Delphic mysteries of our local chemist's emporium glanced at the prescription and handed over a small bottle of tablets. The doctor had told me to beware of alcohol, so not unnaturally I enquired of what these tablets consisted. She replied that it was all on the bottle, and that the vicar and two local residents (whom I knew to be his churchwardens) were also purchasing these tablets and receiving great benefit from them. That was enough for me. I was content to follow where the vicar and his wardens led. They had more knowledge of this vitamin business, both in this world and the next, than I could be expected to have.

Vitamin A was not a success. It left me limp and ineffective. The resources of science, however, were by no means bankrupt. I was prescribed Vitamin B tablets by an unqualified friend, and the same lady at the local chemist told me they were quite infallible, and in this case the ground landlord of the borough, who had gone bankrupt years ago, had acknowledged the benefit he had received from Vitamin B. No, she could not say what the tablets contained, but it was all on the bottle.

Vitamin B failed to have any effect in reduction of pain, or increase of power, so recourse to physiotherapy was advised. This involved a visit to a Danish lady, who was prepared to cure all ills in surprisingly quick time. She exhausted all the arts and tricks with her lamps and shocks, and when her patter approached exhaustion, fell back on the advocacy of Vitamin C, which had cured asthma and appendicitis in the same patient at the same time, but not on the same side of him. So that afternoon, repairing again to the discreet lady in the chemist's shop, I was credibly informed that Vitamin C was even more wonderful than its poor relations of the higher alphabetical categories. I was glad to hear that it cost no more, that the town clerk and borough surveyor were regular participants in this orgy of tablets, and that the ingredients were all duly named on the bottle, as required by law. They must be effective, because she supplied them to several of Dr. X's patients. As Dr. X was my own doctor, I accepted this evidence of the discreet assistant as a tribute equally to Vitamin C and to Dr. X. In this way, having wandered rather weakly down the alphabet, I came to pin my faith in Vitamin C as the one restorer of health and strength, having in accordance with advice abandoned my previous prescriptions of a whisky and soda, a bottle of burgundy, or a pint of bitter.

All went well with the new cure. I paid the doctor's bill and the chemist's bill. I swallowed with misgiving a number of white objects. Then unhappily an old friend of mine fell into financial difficulties and found the jury at the Old Bailey so unsympathetic that he retired to prison for four years. Naturally I was sorry, but in this case particularly so, for I had not seen him sober for the last forty years, and I wondered what effect this suddenly enforced abstinence from alcohol might have upon him. I consulted the Senior Medical Officer of the Prison and asked him whether, on receiving an elderly chronic alcoholic, he would treat him as a drug addict, and "taper off" his doses of the drug from week to week. To my surprise he said that the new scientific method was to cut him off from all alcohol. When I asked if he gave anything to compensate for this loss, he surprised me still more by saying that they would give him regular doses of Vitamin B, for there was Vitamin B in all forms of alcohol, and when he no longer absorbed alcohol, he was missing Vitamin B.

So what's a fellow to do?

I returned home and saw the lights of the "local" opposite our small house. Surely it is simpler to step across the street and take my Vitamin B in warmth and light and good company, rather than go to the chemist and buy from his demure female assistant a bottle of expensive tablets? Economy and comfort and companionship will take me every time to the "local." But I hope the doctor and the chemist still continue to ply their profitable vocations.

ALEXANDER PATERSON

The Arts and Entertainment

THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

THE weather induced such good humour that from the start failure was unthinkable; and even when the wind changed and the sky clouded, spirits were sustained by the fortunate outcome of the controversy about floodlighting the Castle. High in the sky, on a carpet of green turf, a dazzling mass of buildings and fortifications hangs white above a great black void. I see it from my window as I write—a fabulous spectacle.

Foreigners are not greatly in evidence, and none of them, I fear, has followed the Salzburg example and bought a kilt. Apart from a grumble or two from the French about the amount of Brahms (how the French hate Brahms!) they all seem enthusiastic; and I think with some reason. The problem of accommodation has been capitally handled; food is seldom excellent, but at least available; Scottish politeness is such as to amaze and delight the English visitor. The day is furiously packed. The incurably energetic can begin the day at half-past ten with marionettes, and end it towards midnight watching the pipers and dancers on the Castle Terrace. At eleven there is chamber music, mostly supplied by the Jacques orchestra, in the pleasant Freemasons' Hall. These matinées have provided most of the quasi-novelties as well as some of the most enjoyable experiences of the Festival: at one of them Finzi's *Dies Natalis* deeply pleased, at another a profound impression was created by Britten's *Les Illuminations* and by the interpretation of Peter Pears, which was outstanding even for him. The afternoon, in my experience the day's worst time for hearing music, is occasionally free; but the evening brings a bewildering choice. Every night either *Macbeth* or *Figaro*; every night *The Sleeping Beauty*; every night the Old Vic or the Jouvet company; concerts by a succession of five orchestras. Inside or outside the Festival framework all sorts of other things are going on: a couple of T. S. Eliot plays, a film festival, an industrial display; at Dunfermline Abbey an English version of Hofmannsthal's *Everyman*.

Many people thought the whole scheme too ambitious and too closely modelled on Salzburg, but full houses and a good many memorable performances have dispelled pessimism and justified the enterprise of Rudolf Bing and his Edinburgh supporters. The public is plainly delighted, and some of the criticisms which have appeared in the local and national press seem oddly unpractical. Certainly modern music must be more fully represented another year; certainly we should be glad to hear more of the riches of Scottish traditional song. But it is unreasonable

to blame the committee for taking a fairly safe line in the first year, and unrealistic to pretend that Scotland has so far contributed anything substantial to the world's repertoire of concert music. If well-meaning patriots are allowed to flood future programmes with the works of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, William Wallace and Hamish MacCunn, it will quickly become easier to get a sleeper from King's Cross to Waverley.

So far nothing has been more satisfying than the series of Brahms and Schubert chamber music played by Schnabel, Szigeti, Primrose and Fournier. It is presumably Schnabel's profound musicianship which has welded this obviously heterogeneous group into so good an ensemble; he himself has played throughout like a god—if one can think of any god so little concerned to assert his own power. Gone is the occasional brusqueness and asperity which used to disconcert his more judicious admirers in the past; the sovereign intelligence of the conception is now realised with consistently beautiful tone, and the more decorative and playful passages are particularly exquisite. Fournier's cello is in perfect sympathy; and so, too, is the viola playing of Primrose, though on another occasion he showed himself capable of a glibly brilliant and sadly unmusical performance of the Walton *Viola Concerto*. Oddly enough, it was Szigeti who seemed at times the least assimilable member of the consort: fine, intellectual musician as he is, he sometimes attacked phrases with too perceptible a determination to squeeze the utmost out of them, and in Schubert especially his cantilena was hardly warm, sensuous or spontaneous enough. But a few nights later, when he played all three Brahms Sonatas with Schnabel, every one of these objections had vanished: the tone was silky, the style easy and impassioned, so that an evening which had appeared formidable on paper proved wholly delightful in performance.

Of the two operas, *Macbeth* was much the more successful: indeed, by the end of the second week it had grown into a splendid performance which suffered only by comparison with the 1939 season at Glyndebourne. Not only is the Scottish Orchestra inadequate in numbers and execution, but it was impossible not to regret the absence of Fritz Busch, who, like Toscanini, knows how to realise Verdi's simplicities and apparent naiveties with such precision, force and conviction that they sound no longer trivial but intensely dramatic; can anyone forget how, under his direction, the big ensembles at the end of the first two acts used to fill the theatre with black waves of pounding, irresistible tone? On the other hand Carl Ebert's production and Caspar Neher's scenery were as gripping and imaginative as before; and while it must be admitted that Francesco Valentino's Macbeth has declined in sheer vigour and bloom of voice, Walter Midgley's Macduff and Owen Brannigan's Banquo were excellent. But the great feature of the performance remains Margherita Grandi's Lady Macbeth, than which no more striking impersonation is to be seen on the contemporary stage; her Roman features, her stature, the baleful intensity of her eye and her general air of magnificence remind one of the grand figures of the theatrical past; she is like one's notion of Mrs. Siddons. I saw the opera twice; and on the second occasion (last Saturday) she gave what can be truly called a sublime performance; the power, the intensity and the variety of colour in her voice seeming even greater than before the war at Glyndebourne, and its flexibility diminished to a barely perceptible degree. All my life I shall remember the tigerish ferocity of her attack on the words "Or tutti sorgete, ministri infernali," the febrile brilliance of her drinking song at the banquet, the great wailing curve of the sleepwalking scene. It is a tragedy that eight years have now elapsed since this incomparable Lady Macbeth was first heard, and not a note of her music (or, indeed, of the whole opera) has been recorded.

Figaro, though immensely popular, marked a sad decline from former Glyndebourne standards. It was, of course, tremendously lively; indeed the highly gifted protagonist (Italo Tajo) was allowed to become too restless and to take altogether unpardonable liberties in the presence of his master and mistress. But the real trouble was the lack of musical finesse, both in the orchestral pit and on the stage; in particular the roughness, poor intonation, lack of line and frequent downright ugly singing of almost all the principals; faults for which on amount of high-spirited acting and production can compensate. One hoped that Elisabeth Schumann (whose recital with Bruno Walter showed her even now incapable of an ugly phrase or note) was not in the audience to hear what had become of the arias which she used to sing so ravishingly. Even the ensembles, once the glory of Glyndebourne, were deficient in light and shade, and none too accurate in detail.

Pre-war Glyndebourne was an artistic duumvirate: its excellence was due to the long and close collaboration of two supremely gifted men of the theatre, Fritz Busch and Carl Ebert. Now, for reasons undisclosed, that happy partnership has been dissolved, and attempts to get other distinguished conductors (first Szell, then Serafin) to step into the breach have proved unsuccessful. The result is a lopsided state of affairs with the production side in the ascendant and the music increasingly neglected. Mr. Christie is doubtless well aware of the present unequal balance of power; can he not persuade Busch and Ebert to resume an historic partnership which ought never to have been interrupted? DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

THEATRE

"Point Valaine," at the Embassy

Mr. Noel Coward has shown less than his usual astuteness in allowing this play, produced by the Lunts in the United States in 1934, to be publicly performed here. It cannot be written off as Juvenilia, for eight years had passed since *Hay Fever* and three years since *Private Lives* (the play on which his reputation most surely rests). No, it belongs to one of those periods of aberration—which produced *The Queen was in the Parlour* and *Cavalcade*—when Mr. Coward's critical sense seems to have been swept away (we saw it happen several times during the course of the war) by a ninth great wave of sentimentality.

Point Valaine is a Tale of Passion in the West Indies as observed by a wordly wise, cynical but kindly novelist with a beard, a Maugham character without the genuine Maugham detachment. The rain falls, bead curtains are pushed aside by characters who are as much clichés as the words they speak to each other: the sultry hotel manageress called Linda (Miss Mary Ellis), who is the mistress of her head-waiter, a Russian like a baboon who makes queer animal noises; the young airman who falls idealistically in love with Linda. Never has the wakening of true love been more shyly, more embarrassingly conveyed. "That's an awfully pretty dress." "I thought everyone had gone to bed." "What's your other name?" "Linda." "That's a pretty name too." "I'm glad you like it." A foreign visitor sat a row in front listening with deep attention to the dialogue. He had obviously been told what unfortunately is true, that Mr. Coward is one of our leading dramatists: in the interval he walked up and down, up and down, with a puzzled expression. At one point a quite incredible woman reporter remarks to the novelist: "I think plays are much easier to write than novels, don't you?" The remark which was meant to show an extraordinary lack of taste and sensitivity rather misfired with an audience only too well aware of how easily this play must have been written.

But the problem remains. Why did Mr. Coward allow it to be produced after thirteen years? Is he quite unaware of the banality of his subject and its treatment? One suspects that this author, who has made a delightful corner in artificial comedy, is sometimes unduly stirred by a chance contact with human life. For human beings when emotionally stirred do talk in clichés. I have heard a woman address her dead child in phrases from a cheap novelette, and most of us are guilty enough of clichés when we are in love. Mr. Coward was separated from ordinary life early by his theatrical success, and one suspects that when he does overhear the common speech, he finds himself overwhelmed by the pathos of its very cheapness and inadequacy. But it is the sense of inadequacy that he fails to convey and with it he loses the pathos.

GRAHAM GREENE

"Twopence Coloured," at the Lyric, Hammersmith

Twopence Coloured provides a most pleasant evening of sophisticated revue with bright ideas and pretty people. The main burden is divided between Miss Elizabeth Welch, who could carry a much heavier one with her eyes alone, and Miss Joyce Grenfell, who is at the very top of her inimitable form and who makes sure of brilliant material by providing her own. The songs and dances which swell out the show are remarkable for being quite un-American in influence. This gives the revue an agreeably individual flavour, sweet but not sugary. Is it this welcome attempt to revive a national tradition that earns the otherwise somewhat surprising backing of the Arts Council? An unexpected pleasure in this kind of entertainment is a Nō play in the Arthur Waley translation; an unexpected pain is the sole American item, a dreadfully maudlin ballad by Irving Berlin which all Miss Welch's artistry cannot redeem.

CURRENT SHOWS

THE Print Room of the British Museum has reopened with a show that could nowhere be surpassed in its combination of quality and variety. (Not that every important part of the collection has been drawn upon—the medieval illuminators for instance, and the Persian miniaturists and the nineteenth-century Frenchmen are not represented.) Rembrandt, Dürer, Claude, Watteau and Turner are given the finest showing, but the Italian and Flemish drawings are prodigious, nor is the Norwich School confounded by the grandeur of the company. About a third of the space is given most rewardingly to Indian art. The watercolours of the Old Masters may be thought peculiarly fascinating, because they are so little dated. An hour's contemplation of all these marvels can be prescribed to anyone discouraged by the world-wide spectacle of human folly, for here is a tangible demonstration of human grandeur of mind and nobility of imagination.

The exhibition at the London Gallery—since I am obliged to descend from the sublime to the worse than ridiculous—suggests a desperate bankruptcy of invention. Some Hollywood company persuaded eleven painters to compete in depicting the Temptation of St. Antony, the winning picture to have the honour of being a "prop" in a film version of *Bel Ami*. The subject has floored the artists completely—perhaps they were cowed by the Hays office: in any case one would not need to be a saint in order to resist the allurements here proposed. Dali has somehow managed to think of something new, the bodies and heads of elephants supported on the legs of Daddy-Long-Legs. The others have flogged their fancies in vain. Max Ernst and Berman, both of them once gifted painters, have sweated in the accumulation of tedium. Delvaux offers just another Delvaux, and Mr. Stanley Spencer's notion of the Thebaid is a Berkshire valley invaded by lumpy nudists. A Sunday picture by a Negro called Pippin is the least unlively object in this dismal platoon. By comparison, those pictures of Cardinals Drinking the Cook's Health appear sincere and expressive.

That commerce can successfully patronise art is proved by the exhibition at the Lefèvre. The textile firm of Ascher commissioned a number of French and English artists to design square scarves for women to wear, and the results for the most part exceed all expectations. Matisse, Derain, Jean Hugo, Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland, John Piper and Ivon Hitchens have been particularly happy. And while the Ben Nicholson and the Frances Hodgkins are questionable as scarves, they make most covetable wall-decorations. (It is interesting that Hitchens's design, which is very close to a picture, furnishes also a most wearable and elegant scarf.) The printing of these textiles is masterly, and art-collectors will want to buy one of these silks, as if they were lithographs. The scheme sets the highest example to British industry, and the exhibition is one of the most exhilarating proofs of current vitality that I have seen. Some pleasant rugs by Cristina Philipps and Olive Mougeot should suggest to amateurs a way of turning their rags and tatters into useful ornaments.

ROGER MARVELL

RADIO NOTES

A voice reading, for a long time, without interruption, on the same subject, is not the accepted idea of good radio. Viscount Samuel's Romanes lecture and T. S. Eliot's reading of his *Four Quartets* each lasted an hour, which is three times as long as the maximum tolerated by those who research into listeners' reactions. Yet this lecture and this poem—for Eliot's voice unified the *Quartets*—were much the best radio material employing the spoken word broadcast during the last ten days. I find only two other items worth mentioning in the same paragraph: Thomas Mann's analysis of the character and destiny of Germany, and Christopher Fry's new play in verse, *The First Born*. Of these four, perhaps only Thomas Mann's words of sour grief at the irrational demoniac quality in music, and therefore in Germany, were written for broadcasting; Lord Samuel's account of the follies and failures of the human race was made for Oxford's gravity, and for the printed page; Eliot's poem for print and the study; Fry's quick-moving verse is written for the lighted stage. Yet each, I believe, gained from its radio presentation something that it could have in no other way.

It is possible even for the impressionable undergraduate to be resolutely unimpressed by a great occasion at the Sheldonian; I remember it as crowded, distracting, and haunted by a small hidden don who coughed nearby like a sick sheep. I have read Eliot's poems since an early one reached me in 1917 near Vimy Ridge; the inflexions and pauses of the poet's voice perfected the images, and made eloquent the "rhythm of ordinary speech" that is Eliot's achievement (I put the much-used phrase in quotation marks because perfection is not ordinary). One can prefer to hear an Albert Hall concert on the radio at home; in the same way there is something to be gained in listening to words read without having to watch the reader, or to shut from the mind other members of the audience.

A critic has used the phrase "truly radiogenic" to mean material for broadcasting that "demands radio, as a violin sonata demands a violin, for its full and proper expression." The phrase is unpleasant; the B.B.C. goes far in its tolerance of criticism to print such a word in the *Listener*. And the idea behind the phrase is almost as bad. Radio, like printing, is an art that mainly serves other arts; in the same way words made for speaking, shaped for the voice "as a violin sonata is for the violin," can be more effective radio than a script packed with "effects," particularly if that script is trivial in conception or ungainly in form. Illustrations can add to print, and studio effects can add to some types of radio material; but illustrations or effects are secondary.

The programmes that the critic I have quoted found uninteresting would, he writes, have gained from an audience. "The function of radio, in fact, was merely to act as a telephone—an instrument which stands singularly aloof from art." Whether words to be spoken get from the physical presence of an audience more than they get from the listeners beyond the microphone, depends on the effect of audience or microphone on the executant, the speaker. But radio as "a mere telephone" can enlarge our lives as the art of printing does; beyond that, not above it or more "artistically," radio in its feature programmes of documentaries can reflect reality in a new way. This novel art-form with its exciting possibilities is developing, but it is not and cannot be the whole or the main thing in broadcast art.

TOM WINTRINGHAM

THE MOVIES

"Sarajevo," at the Academy
"Brute Force," at the Tivoli
"This Gun for Hire," at the Plaza
"Antarctic Whale Hunt," at the Odeon

It is curious to think of the emotions that, in 1939, went to the making of *Sarajevo*. At that date, with a far more brutal and inevitable calamity in sight, the earlier "match to the powder barrel" may even have acquired a sad predestined charm. Sarajevo! An out-of-the-way place, with an out-of-the-way story. That story, at any rate, appealed to M. Max Ophuls, the film's director, as being strongly if unobtrusively romantic. The old Emperor, the operatic court, an independent and gallant heir, morganatic marriage, political unrest, intrigue, assassination—they provide the opportunity for an intimate recasting of history. With what comes after—the European tragedy—we are not concerned. The fated royal couple jog through the streets of Sarajevo in their old-fashioned upright car; a quiet maniac takes aim, fires; it's all over. This moment, implicit from the beginning, closes a family album in which courtship, love, public worries and domestic happiness have been revealed with a light, rueful affection. We have come to admire, as well as to sympathise with, this charming pair of royal lovers. (Unhistorical? Never mind.) Mlle Edwige Feuillère gives an altogether captivating performance as Sophie Chetok, and Mr. John Lodge's Franz Ferdinand has character as well as charm. But what finally decides the appeal of this delicately made film is its picture of court life, seen with an eye that delights equally in elegance and absurdity. Only an exact and playful taste could have devised the first meeting of the lovers (at the unveiling of a hideous statue of the Emperor), the formidable box at the opera, the rides through the woods, the unbreakable etiquette, the stolen moments in a lifetime of tours and addresses. The director, Max Ophuls, is (was?) a Viennese, and the language spoken is French. One enjoys *Sarajevo* the more for knowing that if its story were re-told to-day its hero would probably be the anonymous pie-faced assassin of the final scene. Killing is in fashion, royalty out.

The heroes of *Brute Force* are occupants of a cell in what must surely be America's toughest prison. Though not a very amiable lot, they stick together. The authorities are even more unpleasant, and to the cry of "More discipline!" they introduce a new warden (vividly played by Hume Cronyn), who is a dab at torture with the blinds down and Wagner on the gramophone. There is a grand finale of bombs, arson, machine-guns, and an attempted break-out when they all get killed. And a good thing, too. *Brute Force* is a sensationally made shocker, but it does shock as well as excite, and there is a streak of clumsy sincerity that leaves us uneasy.

The revival of *This Gun for Hire* brings back after three—or is it four?—years one of the few completely successful thrillers made in Hollywood since the gangsters' decline. Its opening sequence of the hired killer getting up, feeding the kitten, packing a pistol in a brief-case, and going off to shoot his man by appointment introduces an inescapable laconic horror that persists to the more conventionally thrilling end. There is nothing romantic about this hero except the fact that he is played by an unsmiling Alad Ladd, who has since yielded abysmally to demands for a soft core. Since we are in for a crop of revivals, I should like to see again the first gangster film that mesmerised us by its grim ironies: *Quick Millions*. "Slap-up wedding," says one top-hatted tough as the gang roll up at the church door. "But we have swell funerals," rejoins another. And so, if I remember rightly, they did.

Those who are curious about the origins of their Soho steaks and margarine and soap rations will find a fascinating documentary of British whaling at the Odeon. *Antarctic Whale Hunt* (number 12 of "This Modern Age") has scooped the first voyage of a floating factory ship, the *Balaena*, and we are shown not only the hunt by catcher ships armed with explosive harpoons but the various processes by which the whale is skinned, cut, sawed, ground and boiled down, before being brought home. There are some magnificent shots of whales careering, ice-floes and drifting snow. The harpoonists are Norwegians, skilled and vain as bull-fighters.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

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Correspondence

THE POLICE AND THE FASCISTS

SIR,—I have read the Home Secretary's letter in your issue of September 6th, and am very glad to read his assurance that both his instructions to the Metropolitan Police and their practice are only to take names and addresses of hecklers at public meetings when there is reasonable suspicion of an offence. But he has no right to complain that the statement to the contrary in my article of August 23rd was misleading, for he did his best for two months to convince me of what I wrote.

As far back as July 2nd I informed him in writing both that the police inspector said it was the settled practice to take all names and addresses demanded by the chairman, whether reasonable suspicion was entertained or not, and that the officer present at the meeting in question said he had acted without the required suspicion; and at no stage of the subsequent correspondence did he challenge my assertion in any way. More weighty still, his answer to my parliamentary question on July 10th could only reasonably be read as an admission to the same effect. (On the question what the two officers really did say, Mr. Ede is at liberty to accept their two-months old recollections when he made his special inquiry, but he must let me prefer the contemporary account of my Labour Party informants, who had no reason whatever for reporting anything but what they had been told in a perfectly friendly discussion.)

On the point as to the propriety of the police giving the names and addresses to the chairmen of (Fascist) meetings, I am sorry to see that Mr. Ede still defends this practice. He argues that this is the proper course because, as he asserts, the responsibility for prosecuting in these cases does not lie primarily with the police. It is a very odd notion that the general duty of the police to enforce the law ceases when you come to this particular offence, an offence closely connected with the important matter of freedom of speech and of the orderly conduct of public meetings; and the only argument Mr. Ede advances in its support is based on what was said in Parliamentary debate in 1936. It is of course elementary that what was said in debate cannot be taken into consideration—cannot indeed even be mentioned—in interpreting statutes; the duty of the police can only be found by looking at the statute itself in the light of the general law.

In any case it is surely wrong to assume that the only alternative to letting the police take the responsibility is automatically to hand *every* name and address that is taken to the chairman, whatever his character and however unlikely it is that he wants it for any honest purpose. This is the sort of difficulty Mr. Ede is bound to meet if he persists in the basic error of treating Fascists as if they were ordinary decent people. The proper course is to let the police administer the law, not to entrust the matter to those lovers of freedom of speech and experts in orderly conduct, the Fascists.

D. N. PRITT

4 Essex Court, Temple, E.C.4.

SIR,—I am not a lawyer, and will not intrude on the legal argument on this question. To me the issue is simple—either the police have the authority to prevent Fascist propaganda or they have not. If they have, why do they not use it? If they have not, or if there is any doubt in the Home Secretary's mind, why does he not seek whatever powers he requires?

The opposition to such action would be negligible. Surely one does not have to argue about whether the war was fought to make Britain safe for Fascist activity.

I would suggest that our Fascists, on conviction, be sentenced to deportation to Germany for a period, where they will see and live under the results of the regime they demand.

GEORGE JEGER

House of Commons,
London, S.W.1.

SIR,—Mr. Ede seeks to justify his attempt to read into the Public Order Act matters which are not there by relying on a statement of Sir John Simon and on his own assessment of what was in the mind of the Tory House of Commons when it considered the Bill. His authority is unsound; his reasoning fallacious; and his conclusion, even if correct, is entirely irrelevant to the point at issue.

Sir John Simon is certainly not a reliable authority on the law relating to police rights and duties at public meetings. It will be recalled how he justified police inactivity at the Fascist meeting at Olympia in June, 1934, on legal grounds which, in May, 1935, were found by the Divisional Court in *Thomas* v. *Sawkins* to have no legal validity whatsoever.

In any event, the passage quoted from Sir John Simon in no way justifies Mr. Ede's contention that the primary duty of taking proceedings for a disturbance rests on the promoter of the meeting and not on the police. Sir John merely pointed out the obvious fact that the Public Order Act did not absolve the promoters from "their proper responsibility" for preserving order, an entirely different matter.

Mr. Ede also relies on the fact that Parliament forced the deletion of a clause in the original Bill which prohibited the police from prosecuting; surely the fact that Parliament took that step does not support but, if anything, disproves, Mr. Ede's theory as to Parliament's intention when passing the Act.

Parliament's intentions, whatever they were, are completely irrelevant. Neither the Court nor anyone else is concerned with what Parliament thought, but with what the Act actually says or does not say. The Act admittedly does not relieve the police of their duty of prosecution; it therefore follows that their Common Law duty applies. This duty lays on police officers primarily, and on private citizens (the promoters of the meeting in this case) only secondarily, the obligation of prosecuting for offences actually committed in the presence of the police. The fact that the Act only permits the police to take the names and addresses when they, the police, are reasonably satisfied that an offence has been committed, surely confirms the view that it is they and not the promoters of the meeting who are the intended prosecutors.

Secondly, the Act says nothing, either expressly or impliedly, to justify the practice, admitted by Mr. Ede, by which the police hand names and addresses to the Fascist chairman. In the absence of direct Parliamentary sanction, again we must look to the Common Law, where, I submit, such a practice has never been heard of.

Mr. Gledhill is right to raise the power of the police to call for an identity card as a device for getting a citizen's name and address which he has rightly refused on other grounds. The citizen's ability to stall is, however, not as easy as he suggests, for if he cannot produce his identity card on request, the police are entitled to insist on his name and address in order to enforce its subsequent production. Were the police to use this device to secure particulars for a purpose not contemplated by the National Registration Act and for a manifestly improper and extra-legal purpose, a citizen is fully justified, morally and legally, in refusing to supply them. Such refusal would at any rate get the whole matter before the Court, and perhaps a Court decision would cause Mr. Ede to forsake the unholy trinity of police evidence at "special inquiries," the Commissioners' instructions, and Sir John Simon, to which at present he seems to owe his allegiance.

C. H. PARSONS

52B Oxford Road,
Kilburn, N.W.6.

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SIR,—Commander Young's letter is such a jumble of jaundiced misinformation that if I beg you to let me comment on it that is only because of the importance of the subject. The T.V.A. is one of the great

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LINDSAY DRUMMOND

things of our time, not only as a practical achievement but also as a political idea. It has shown how neighbouring political units, while retaining their separateness, can be given the benefit of joint schemes of development. That is why it has become a model for such schemes all the world over, and in the nature of things such schemes cannot be anything but public undertakings. If, therefore, any of them has seen the light in the offices of Unilever, the more credit to those at the head of that business; but to my knowledge the only one devised by them is the East African groundnuts scheme. It was a brilliant idea expertly worked out, of which Unilever made a present to the Labour Government without condition or reward. If the Government had to come back and ask Unilever to run the scheme for them as a start, is it not precisely because, instead of preparing themselves for Socialist work, all too many have found it easier to be Socialists by denunciation?

I can only surmise Commander Young got his queer idea because, having been myself long interested in such functional schemes, I happen for the past three years to have had also an advisory connection with Unilevers. Before that, during the war years, I was responsible for getting together the small group of experts from the East European governments then in refuge in London who produced the study on "The Economic Development of South-Eastern Europe," published by the Oxford University Press for P.E.P. It was a purely factual study of local needs and possibilities, and our work left us with certain clear convictions: (i) that the only chance for regional co-operation lay in such functional schemes which would neutralise political fears and jealousies; (ii) that such schemes on an adequate scale could not be carried out without help from the West, financial and technical; (iii) that unless that help were linked to a purely technical control only a trickle of the intended benefits would percolate to the mass of the peoples of those countries. "Less naive" visitors than Commander Young, not to mention those knowing something about the problem, are aware that the peoples of South-eastern Europe are poor not because their countries are poorly endowed, but because they have always been burdened with an excessive and wasteful political overhead. The true interest of those peasant masses altogether coincides with the technical needs of any successful international scheme for joint development.

DAVID MITRANY

THE BRITISH CAR

SIR,—Mr. Christopher Shawcross in his article on the British motor industry has evidently taken more trouble to acquire knowledge about the industry than do most writers. Despite that, I would like to give a few particulars which set his suggestions in a different perspective.

Complaining of the variety of production in this country, he suggests that not only should the motor car industry be rationalised by a merger of all the large factories into one combine and the elimination of many small concerns, but that its present output should be cut by about half.

America has not found that the key to success lies in a drastic reduction of variety. Its 22 makers produce about 60 basic models, and these in turn are sold with no fewer than 207 body variations of sedans, broughams, roadsters, coupés, station wagons, etc. When Mr. Shawcross speaks of 100 different models in this country he means 100 different types of body variation, because the basic models here are no more than in America. The public abroad, to whom we are looking as purchasers, are sufficiently "choosey" to demand a wide variety which, if we cannot supply, the Americans, the Italians, or even the French will. In fact, our best export models in some countries are just those sporting types that presumably would be eliminated under rationalisation.

Standardisation of components has made a great deal of progress, and the public do not realise the number of parts and even engines that are interchangeable between what are listed as different models. Mr. Shawcross speaks, for instance, of a great number of screen-wipers. That statement leads to misleading conclusions. There are two basic types of screen-wiper with various standard additional parts, out of which can be built a great variety of complete wipers without, however, raising serious production problems.

Reduction of models was going on fast before the war, and if it had not been for those six years of shut down, it would have made much greater progress by now. For instance, between 1936 and now twelve firms, which between them then made 100 models, make only 33 now. We have to wait for the post-war programmes to develop before we can see the further large step forward that has been made.

It is scarcely three months since Parliament finally decided that the horse-power tax, which had been responsible for so much diversity in British practice, should be abolished, and yet already two makers have announced a reduction of models, and we shall undoubtedly hear of more later on.

To press the industry to concentrate on a handful of models, or more drastically to combine into one large concern, would mean an enormous loss of production over the next three years, just at a time when we might be selling vehicles abroad. If a firm makes three models and has to drop two, that does not mean it will get three times the production on the one model: more probably its output will drop by two-thirds. Apart from the mere loss of production, the industry would be thrown into chaos because the plant and tool makers would be unable to supply the demands for re-tooling for such a major change. Would the nation be likely to contemplate the unemployment of a greater part of the industry, either of its labour or its plant and equipment, for possibly three years? Equally it would be impossible, except by a long gap in production, for the industry to abandon car production and manufacture something else with the plants that are available. It will be remembered from the first two years of the war how long it took to tool up industry for new production. We do not want to repeat that experience.

If the industry's output were cut by half, costs would probably be doubled, and we should lose every export order on the books, running now perhaps into hundreds of thousands. And in making comparison with American costs, the fundamental costs of raw materials and coal are heavily loaded against us already. The motor industry, including commercial vehicles, has exported at the rate of over £1 million a week for the last 18 months, which is sufficient to buy the rations of 2,000,000 people a week. Do we want to throw that aside for a problematical gain in three years' time? We have produced 138,000 cars in the first six months of this year, whereas the French, with all their concentration, have produced only 32,500. The present policy of the Government to encourage export, allowing a quota for replacement at home, is clearly right, and the industry could have made an even greater contribution if the material supplies had been available.

I listen with great respect to the views of politicians on broad considerations of national welfare, but I listen with considerably less respect when they attempt to lay down the details of a commercial operation. Perhaps the cost and output of coal during the next few years will give us a guide as to their latter qualifications.

No, Sir, encourage us to carry on the good work with the progressive tendencies already in force, and you will be making the best use of a capable and efficient industry.

R. GRESHAM COOKE,
Director,
Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders

THE PUNJAB

SIR,—Thank you for your editorial on "The Punjab's Price for Freedom." You have done a valuable service to Indo-British relations. Most of the Indians I know, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh, were feeling very bitter about the way the British press wa[s]

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handling the Indian news—exaggerating the disorders and blacking out the strenuous efforts of the Indian leaders and officials to restore peace. Two questions were naturally in their minds : (1) Do the British really want the friendship of India and Pakistan? (2) Is not Stalin right in not allowing such journalists in Russia and should not Nehru and Jinnah follow his example? Your editorial has gone a long way to restore their faith in British fair play.

Things in India are, no doubt, bad enough, but it is important that people here should see them in their proper perspective. It would be of considerable help if you would kindly publish a map of India, indicating the size of the present trouble areas compared with the size of the whole sub-continent.

Figures about casualties are anybody's guess, because there is no way of verifying them at the moment. But I would give you two instances of how unreliable these first press reports may be. In 1940 there was widespread rioting in Raipura, East Bengal, and the first press reports said that at least 2,000 people were killed. Three days after the riots started I led a party of relief workers to that area and we found that, although there was terrible looting and arson, there was only one case of death. Last year in the mass rising of Muslims against Hindus in Noakhali the first figures were given as 5,000 dead. Latest figures show that the number of deaths was not more than 200. People often fly from mere panic and experience shows that nothing is more untrustworthy than the stories told by refugees.

Some pictures are being published here about the destruction caused by these riots. These no more represent the whole picture than say a collection of the photographs of all the bomb damage in London would give a representative picture of this war-torn city.

The important thing in India to-day is not these riots, which are, after all, a hangover from the past, but the way in which the Governments of India and Pakistan are co-operating and the majority of the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh leaders and officials are trying to restore peace. That is a story which, I hope, some honest British journalist would try to tell one day.

SAMAR R. SEN

27B Redcliffe Square, S.W.10.

SOVIET LITERATURE

SIR,—Mr. Raymond Mortimer in his article on Soviet literature seems to agree with a widely held modern view that politico-religious freedom is favourable or even necessary to the creation of works of art. There is not the slightest evidence for this view as far as I can see. The vast majority of Western works of art produced from the fifth to the middle of the fourteen century (I do not know where Mr. Mortimer ends his Dark Ages) were done in the service and under the censorship of a Church which pursued deviation from her dogma with venom, and done by people of whom it would be true to say that they were "conditioned to desire nothing else" (than the Catholic faith). Those works of art include some of the purest and greatest of our epoch. During the golden age of political and religious freedom in the West, the latter half of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, nothing comparable was produced. The real point at issue is, as Mr. Mortimer implies, whether the content of Communism is as evocative to the Russian artist now as that of Christianity was to European artists when it was an effective force. It is improbable that the point will be decided. The dialectical conflict in its imminent and final phase is likely to beget a fringe of peasant tribes round the deadly ruins of our world. These will be under the old necessity of inventing gods and the arts which go in their service but are unlikely in the struggle for existence to be much concerned with democratic liberty. Finally, it is hardly surprising that the Russians reject Picasso and his followers since the Communist is *ipso facto* an optimist and Picasso, whatever views he may now profess, like all imaginative artists of our time, is not.

JOHN ARMSTRONG

Oriental Cottage, Lamorna, near Penzance.

[Mr. Mortimer writes: "In the visual arts the need, I suggest, is not for liberty of opinion but for liberty to experiment in form. In the Dark and Middle Ages the Church, so far from suppressing formal innovations, encouraged the development successively of Romanesque and Gothic, and was the patron of Giotto's revolutionary style. To the writer, on the other hand, liberty of opinion is important. The literature of the Dark Ages is a tenuous stream, and such later medieval writers as Dante and Chaucer enjoyed a liberty that in Soviet Russia would be thought disgraceful."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

TROOPS OR TOURISTS

SIR,—I hope very much that I am wrong, but in the course of my frequent voyagings in the Midlands, during which I have to meet all sorts of people, I am finding some evidence of an unfortunate attitude of mind among Labour supporters in what are commonly called the working classes. This finds its expression in a positive gloating over restrictions which they imagine, in their blindness, are directed against the middle classes.

Let me give you a topical illustration. When discussing the Government's recent financial restrictions I have been surprised to hear the most approval (expressed with ill-concealed delight) at the ban on travel abroad. This, I have been informed, will teach us—whoever "us" may be. In other words, I suggest that too many people are supporting these deprivations of liberty for the wrong reason, that is, merely because they see in them some sort of class move. To a lesser degree, some also display the same way of thinking about the petrol cut.

In the Services this kind of thing was known as "bloody-mindedness," or one of the many ways of being "bolshy." Always a symptom of petty-mindedness, it is most regrettable that it should come to the front at a time when most of us are confused and troubled. If it grows it can lead to a dangerous antagonism, dangerous because I believe that it was the balance of the middle-class vote which put the Government in, and which on another occasion can as easily put them out.

I have had to cancel my long-awaited holiday in France, and will probably have to lay my car up, all of which I find very disagreeable. But, to imagine that these pleasures are confined to the middle classes is an indication of prejudiced thinking. A bli d spot, in fact. It would be just as unreasonable, simply because they make no appeal to me, for me to advocate the banning of "the dogs" and "the geegees"; although, they are at least as dangerous to the national economy, and perhaps even slightly more wasteful of the national energy.

What worries me quite as much as the danger of an increase in class hostility caused by this pin-pricking attitude (not discouraged by certain utterances of the less-intelligent members of the Government) is that the satisfaction of giving vent to this ill-founded envy is evidence of failure to comprehend the general nature of the present crisis.

Ex-R.A.F.

GEORGE MOORE

SIR,—Mr. Raymond Mortimer is in error when he asserts that George Moore was "successfully sued by a Mr. Lewis Seymour" for libel.

The action against Moore (in November, 1917) was discontinued; and judgment was eventually given for the remaining defendants, the publishers and printers of the book concerned.

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Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844, p. 297.

WHEN Halévy died in 1937, he had prepared a great deal of material for a fourth volume of his History of England in the Nineteenth Century. Some important chapters had been completed and full notes assembled for others. Professor Vaucher, the well-known historian, has edited this material with Madame Halévy's help, and Halévy's large audience will be grateful for their scholarship and care. The new volume* is a particularly valuable sequel to the celebrated work with which the series opened.

In finishing his first volume Halévy remarked that England, with her spectacular contrasts of wealth and poverty, exhibited all the conditions that might be expected to produce revolution.

> If the materialistic interpretation of history is to be trusted, if economic facts explain the course taken by the human race in its history, the England of the 19th century was surely, above all other countries, destined to revolution both political and religious. But it was not to be so. In no other country have social changes been accomplished with such a marked and gradual continuity.

A historian who has discovered this paradox is naturally specially interested in the period discussed in this volume, for it embraces the year memorable for the outbreak of revolution in most of Europe. Gladstone, then a Conservative but a Conservative to whom, unlike most of his countrymen, Europe was something more than a collection of rival Powers, declared that the Paris Revolution of 1848 was the greatest disaster in history, for it had produced a climate of panic and hatred on the Continent in which no single Government had discovered any gift for constructive statesmanship. Universal revolution had thus been followed by universal reaction. England had a taste of revolution but it was a taste of revolution in the sense that vaccination is a taste of smallpox. In this case the threat of revolution was followed not by reaction but by reform.

Most people who are over seventy can remember a time when they doubted whether Britain had not lost more than she gained by escaping revolution. Half a century ago we knew less than we know to-day of the price a people pays for the benefits revolution brings. One young man drew a sombre picture. Lowes Dickinson gave a vivid account in his book, *Reaction and Revolution in Modern France*, of the results of the revolutionary method. "Of parties it has made factions, of governments tyrants and of opponents conspirators." Few of us would think that too dark a picture of a great part of Europe to-day, or would under-estimate the advantages of that power of adaptation which is the most striking quality in British history.

To some tastes a history of compromises and accommodations lacks the grandeur of noble principles. Michelet was indignant that Burke dared to commend our tepid revolution of 1688, our insular and unimaginative achievement, to the humanitarians of 1789 with their message of generous ecstacy to mankind. What a contrast England with her long history of successful aggression offered to revolutionary France, who had created a self-conscious nation out of its noble passion for justice and unity. In his moving little book, *Le Peuple*, he traced the Englishman's success in co-operating in industry and politics to a cold temperament that enabled Englishmen to work together though they had no feeling for each other. The Frenchman demanded affection and unity of spirit. Yet he found something to admire in the product of those forces and institutions to which Halévy paid such close attention. The author of many bitter passages about British History once wrote to Darwin that he rejoiced when he came to England in 1830 to think that "the savage Napoleon had never conquered her."

Halévy shows himself a good Frenchman in bringing an element of cynical humour into his study of what he admired as a great political success. He is amused by the self-satisfaction of British politicians and their confidence in the integrity of their principles. He is always thinking from Europe to Britain and back again from Britain to Europe, catching in this way lights and facets that many a historian would miss. Tocqueville talking to Nassau Senior at the time of the Indian Mutiny described the cold illwill, so common on the Continent, to a people that was believed to pursue its own course with little thought of Europe. Halévy is all the better as a historian of Britain because he had lived in that atmosphere; the atmosphere reflected in the saying of Thiers that Britain was Europe's good boy, and France her bad boy, and that posterity would like the bad boy the better of the two.

Comparing England with the Continent in 1848 Halévy observes that in Paris, Vienna and Berlin Governments used force against popular insurrection and a disaffected bourgeoisie, whereas in England the Government kept armed force in the background and encouraged the people to defend itself against revolution. To understand how this was possible in the conditions to which Disraeli applied his phrase of the Two Nations, we must remember that in the Forties there were three movements agitating the new industrial England; one for repealing the Corn Laws, another for establishing the Ten Hours day in the textile factories, and a third for the Charter. The Repealers used the Chartists to foment hostility to the Corn Laws, and then defeated them in a competition for working-class support. Thus they displaced a working-class movement and substituted a middle-class movement as the chief popular force in politics. (Halévy calls attention to a startling article in the *Quarterly Review* in December, 1842, to which he thinks historians have given too little importance, an article that shows to what lengths in the way of exciting disorder the Repealers went in the first of these processes). Fundamentally, of course, the Repealers and the Chartists had little in common; the Repealers supported the new Poor Law and resisted Factory Reform; the Chartists wanted the Ten Hours day and they wished to pull down the hated workhouses. They soon fell out, and in the struggle the Chartists were badly beaten.

Why was this? Halévy finds the answer in the Nonconformist Chapel. By this time Methodism had become, as a rule in the towns, a settled and respectable religion, suited to the well-to-do. It attracted the men who were rising from the ranks of unskilled labour, it gave them office, responsibility and interests; and it flattered the sense of virtue in men who had often owed their success in life to their Puritan habits. Having studied the Reports of the Nonconformist Societies Halévy is struck by their want of sympathy with the workers' demand for shorter hours. In fact, the Nonconformist leaders generally shared the view of the Repealers on that subject as well as on the injustice of the Corn Laws. (Leading Churchmen like Hook, the famous Vicar of Leeds, were good friends to the Ten Hours Bill.) The men who made their way out of the new industrial barbarism and should have been leaders of the revolt of the proletariat, were thus alienated from the movements that caught fire from the rhetoric of Oastler and O'Connor. What a contrast to Paris in 1792! Mr. Thompson shows in his book on the French Revolution that at the time of the September massacres the majority of the members of the Paris Commune were merchants or tradesmen.

Halévy goes so far as to say that by his success in drawing the discontented from the Chartist into the Repeal movement, Cobden composed the class-war in the towns. This does less than justice to the effect of the Ten Hours Act. The Chartist movement in the North was largely a revolt against the atmosphere of the prison that enveloped the new industrial life. Sir James Graham's notorious phrase about the life of the poor that it was "but eating, drinking, working and dying" resounded, an explosive formula, in the treadmill towns of Lancashire and the West Riding. The Ten Hours Act, the first recognition of the workman's right to a larger life, helped to satisfy the social self-respect that was so deeply affronted by the unfeeling discipline of the new factory and the new workhouse. By the year 1848, when the revolutionary fever was spreading from people to people on the Continent, the Corn Laws had been repealed (1846) and the Ten Hours battle had been won (1847). London enlisted its 160,000 special constables in April, 1848, to protect England from a danger that had passed.

The danger had passed because of a quality in British history that Michelet had left out in his explanation of the stability of the ruling classes. Wellington and Peel established a principle of Conservatism that ruled Conservative politics from the time of Catholic Emancipation in 1829 to the Irish crisis of 1885. They took the view that a wise Conservative leader will recognise that a time comes in political conflict when it is more injurious to the public interest to continue to resist a change than to accept it and try to make it as harmless as possible. The alternative may be disorder and confusion. Peel and Wellington acted on this principle when they made their *volte-face* over Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and when they accepted defeat on the Reform Bill of 1832. Peel acted in this spirit in his treatment of politics after the Reform Act had been passed, making no attempt to keep alive hostility to the Act, and modernising his party as a party of conservative reform. England thus escaped an evil that has afflicted France since the Revolution, the presence of "internal *émigrés*," a class with political and moral influence that sulks and seeks to discredit the regime.

Halévy, speaking of Peel's decision for Repeal in 1845, says that the aristocracy surrendered political privileges in 1832 to preserve economic privileges, and surrendered economic privileges in 1846 to preserve political privileges. That is certainly what Peel thought, and rightly thought, he was doing in 1846. He thought that he was saving the nation with its consent and the aristocracy in spite of itself. Having Pitt's power and self-confidence, he expected, after carrying his Cabinet with one exception, to carry his party, but Disraeli upset all his calculations. Yet Peel's failure had one good result. It brought Lord John Russell into power and Russell was a good friend to the Ten Hours Bill, of which Peel was still a convinced opponent. So the Ten Hours Bill was passed, partly by the patronage of the Whig Government, partly by the landlords anxious for revenge on the Repealers.

The Peel precedent was in many minds in 1885, when Lord Salisbury sent Carnarvon, known to be a Home Ruler, to Ireland as Viceroy. It was very much in Gladstone's mind when the overwhelming demand of the new Irish electorate for Home Rule had created a situation as serious as that created in 1829 by O'Connell's power in Ireland. Unfortunately, the Peel precedent might be taken as a warning rather than as an example. If Peel had been less self-confident in 1845 or if he had avoided his earlier mistake of excluding Disraeli from office, he might have carried his party. But in fact he had broken up his party and it did not hold effective office for another twenty years. To friends who wanted him to attempt to find an Irish settlement by consent, as Gladstone urged, Salisbury replied that he would not treat his party as Peel had treated it. He knew that he would find his Disraeli in Randolph Churchill. So he shrank from all idea of compromise and returned to coercion. Thus the best chance of keeping Ireland within the British orbit was lost, because the Conservative leader rejected the principles of Wellington and Peel. The same decision a generation later threw us into the confusion in which we were overtaken by the first World War.

J. L. HAMMOND

* *Histoire du Peuple Anglais au XIXe Siècle. IV. Le Milieu du Siècle*, 1841-1852. By Elie Halévy. *Librairie Hachette.*

POIL DE CAROTTE

Carrots. By JULES RENARD. Translated by G. W. STONIER. *Grey Walls Press.* 10s. 6d.

Literature has been slow, as Mr. Stonier says in his introduction to this first English translation of *Poil de Carotte*, to penetrate the interior of the tropic of childhood. Memory, the parasite, has grown a vivid, beguiling liana over this savage period of our lives and is silent about the heathenish practices of the tribes buried in the forest. Childhood, said Renard, was the period of diabolical fierceness; and his own experience, which made him a timid, exacting and rasping little man, incurably maimed in soul, prevented him, perhaps, from knowing that the idealisation of childhood begins in childhood itself. The "sugar child," as he scornfully called it, begins young, simply because man is a self-congratulatory animal and by this trait civilises himself. Renard, on the other hand, would be one of those who assent to the chapter in Bulwer Lytton's *The Coming Race*, a Utopia where children are the official assassins and executioners. For Renard belonged to the family of the hated, the spoiled, the difficult, the children scarred in heart or neglected, who make a treaty with their evil and remain children all their lives; and since we have seen the decline of authoritarian religion and family authority and have acquiesced in the bias of psychological inquiry, we have discovered how large this family is. How much of our time is spent—we find—in a life and death struggle with the unredeemed childhoods of our friends.

It would be interesting to decide whether Renard's own book was not just as much an attempt to foster a new esteem, as the concoction of the "sugared child" had been. A little child shall lead them—children, in literature, are wicked little propagandists. We can see where Topsy, David Copperfield and Little Lord Fauntleroy were taking us; even Huck Finn, one of the earliest naturals and a casualty of his civilisation, projected what America had lost by becoming Tom Sawyer. Similarly in Carrots, with his clouted head, his hair full of lice, his dirty feet and his pockets hanging out "like donkey's ears," we see not only a victim of the slovenliness of peasant life, but a portent. His mother has put a kind of awful, bourgeois furniture polish over the base peasant habit—what a picture of life in the Midi we get between the lines, a picture as squalid as anything in *Madame Bovary*—but Carrots seems to foreshadow more than revolt. The two wars of our decaying society have thrown up thousands more like him; he is the evacuee, the dead-end kid of our time. Only a few, like Renard, can turn to art rather to crime.

What are Renard's virtues as a writer? They spring, of course, from his suffering; like a saint he has tenaciously, obstinately identified himself with his own world. He is a child still. Mr. Stonier, in one of the most pointed introductions I have read to any book, sets out the excellencies. He draws attention especially to the wonderful account of Carrots watching the top leaf of a tree as a squall approaches and then strikes; and indeed this is a breath-taking example of how Renard retrieves whole hours of childhood which even the lyrical had not noticed. Renard cuts across all. The minute eye is his gift, the child's minute eye.

The literary eye is abandoned. He sees thing by thing where the literary eye sees too much. Then Renard is impartial and unembarrassed in experience. He brings back the forgotten colloquies of the pot ("Do I want to? Can I last?") He remembers the animals it is torture to kill, the others that can be killed for reasons that are simple, drastic and fantastic. He can document the imagination of children. Their passions belong to the wild, physical and stunted world of Webster. Carrots betrays Violone, the master who is making love to one of the boys school, a boy who is envied for his blushes. The master leaves and Carrots watches him go from the window of the detention room:

> . . . there is a crash of broken glass.
>
> All eyes are raised to the little barred windows of the detention room. A wild ugly head appears, that of Carrots! He grimaces, like a livid little animal in a cage, with hair over his eyes and teeth flashing. He thrusts his right hand through the jagged pane, which wounds him as though it were alive, and shakes a bloody fist at Violone.
>
> "Little idiot!" says the master. "Are you satisfied now?"
>
> "Satisfied!" cries Carrots, while with a second blow he briskly shatters another pane, "Why did you kiss him and not me?"
>
> And he adds, daubing his face with the blood that flows from his wounded hand:
>
> "I can have red cheeks too, when I like!"

What appalling novels overweighted and evasive one has read about such themes; but Renard, writing in the historic present—which Mr. Stonier has rightly preserved—pares down his sentences until he is sure that he is the child seeing and not the adult divagating. He returns, as the writer on childhood must, to the life of the senses, to the animal smells and calculations and to the pathos of the animal which is forced to live in a world where notions of good and evil come down without warning or reason like the hot boot of a gardener upon the worm or the snail.

Carrots is a cruel and ironical book, but it is often comical and is as close as a dog is to domestic life. Not a crumb drops, not a fly buzzes unwatched. Some difficulty arises for the translator because of the extreme economy of the writing and the exact, waspish dialogue. Fear has formalised the thoughts of the boy and a Tartuffian sadism has made the dreadful Madame Lépic epigrammatic. Mr. Stonier's renderings of difficult passages are brilliant; but I think that, here and there, he has been a little stiff with those formal phrases which stick like hair combs out of the coiffured vernacular of the French. The phrase, "Do we have to ask your permission, by any chance?" seems, for example, a gallicism and we cannot imagine that in a farmhouse Carrots would speak of being "taken short." There is a dual vein in Renard's writing, a subtle, "unfair" change of point of view from sentence to sentence which the historic present is used to disguise; one moment he is writing common speech, the next he is as formal as La Fontaine. It is often doubtful whether Carrots is speaking or thinking, but when he thinks aloud we catch the boldness of a literary language which has all the scathing and the aplomb of La Fontaine and Molière in its throat. I hope that Mr. Stonier will now turn to the translation of Renard's *Journal;* and there are the exquisite animal pieces, the *Histoires Naturelles*, some of which were published for the first time in this paper a few months ago under Mr. Stonier's hand. *Carrots* has been illustrated by Mr. Fred Uhlman, an artist who has caught the peculiarity of Renard's approach with uncommon imagination and fidelity. The black-and-white drawings deserved better reproduction, but the coloured ones are exquisite.

V. S. PRITCHETT

THE AGE OF FAITH

The Paradox of Nationalism. By JULIUS BRAUNTHAL. *St. Botolph Publishing Co.* 5s.
Philosophy and Politics. By BERTRAND RUSSELL. *National Book League.* 2s. 6d.

Of course it's been said many times before. But I can recall no book that collects in a short space so many compelling illustrations of Mr. Braunthal's thesis that it is nationalism and not particular nations that are responsible for the aggressions, enslavements and wars that have tortured the human race. Once it was religious zeal that justified the worst atrocities; Mr. Braunthal's chapter on the Catholic Church and the Holy Inquisition reminds one that the rule of Catholicism, when it was in undisputed power, was almost as monstrous in the suffering it inflicted as Hitler's rule in Europe. The difference was that Hitler had techniques of wickedness that enabled him to slaughter people in larger numbers in a shorter time; but the record of the Inquisition, as Mr. Braunthal recalls, quoting the recognised authorities, was as savage and the tortures it inflicted on tens of thousands of people, year by year, over several hundred years, were as nauseating and fanatical as any humanity has known, even in the twentieth century. Some Protestants were ready to be just as cruel when they got the chance, but the rise of Protestantism coincided, and indeed was part of, the civilising process of individualism; it prepared the way for the short-lived era of comparative toleration that now seems to be coming to an end. In our day it has been nationalism that excused most of the murder and cruelty, and Mr. Braunthal has no difficulty in showing that at some phase of its history, every nation, German, Russian, British, French, Japanese, Italian or what you will, has committed the vilest crimes in the sacred name of national interest or public security. Even in terms of theory it is easy to find parallels to the rabid outpourings of the Treitschkes and Bernhardis in the utterances of such civilised and respected figures as Ruskin and Lord Roberts. Nations have characteristics which change over the centuries, but "national character" is a myth.

Mr. Braunthal rightly holds that the change from the aggressive to the peace-loving State is largely a function of changing economic and political institutions. He might well have referred to the change in the national characteristics of America as she emerges from isolationism and enters the imperialist phase. He assumes, too easily I think, that ordinary men are haters of war; he says nothing of the drives within them that are exploited by rulers who, after all, are only urged on by the same drives as their subjects. Mr. Braunthal belongs at heart to the old school of Socialists who inherited from the eighteenth century the notion that men and women were good and only their rulers wicked. But that is no argument against the thesis that peace depends on the achievement of a Socialist world organisation, and Mr. Braunthal chooses a good parallel when he quotes Dante looking into the future in search of a united Italy at a period when Pisa and Genoa and Florence and Verona fought unceasingly and, as men then thought, for ever incurably, because of their "national" and irreconciliable diversities of character and interest.

Bertrand Russell adds a complication. Our national passions are no longer the worst or the dominant sources of our misery. We are back in an Age of Faith. Ideology is the new name for the fanatical religions that now are the excuse for persecution, murder and war. His essay, written with that brilliant lucidity that has in our period no parallel, is a plea for Empiricism in philosophy and for Liberalism, its political counterpart. By way of illustration Mr. Russell, omitting much, finds Plato, as a political adviser, only a totalitarian whose reputation, outside philosophy, rests on the snobbery of scholars. In dealing with Hegel's nonsense he is at his most caustic. I should like to think that the paragraph in which he summarises Hegel's political philosophy was the last word anyone would ever write on this foolish subject.

Mr. Russell argues that it is not true that fanaticism wins its battles against reason, even in the crude sense of military victory. "In every important war since 1700 the more democratic side has been victorious." Empiricists and Liberals do not handicap themselves by exiling or murdering their best scientists because of the racial affinities of their grandmothers. Mr. Russell believes that one of the essentials, if the world is to remain habitable, is that people who are Liberals, in the sense that they are not too sure that they are wholly right, should maintain, as their profoundest conviction, "the value of liberty, scientific freedom and mutual forbearance." Here I am sure that Mr. Russell is right, even though I differ from him in his analyses of current politics. This scientific and rational faith was maintained, by a few at least, even in the heat of the greatest of international wars; it is of equal importance that it should survive in the still more difficult and confused circumstances of a war of ideologies.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

NOVELS AND NEAR-NOVELS

Revolt in the Backlands. By EUCLIDES DA CUNHA. *Gollancz.* 16s.

Off to Philadelphia in the Morning. By JACK JONES. *Hamish Hamilton.* 8s. 6d.

Georgia Boy. By ERSKINE CALDWELL. *Falcon Press.* 6s.

A Bear Coughs at the North Pole. By ROBERT PAYNE. *Heinemann.* 6s.

Revolt in the Backlands is not a novel in the strict sense. Yet it is certainly such stuff as novels are made of. It is the story of a peasant revolt, under the leadership of a crazy rural messiah, in the arid half-deserts of Northern Brazil. For nearly a year these religious enthusiasts, who were as handy with a rifle as a rosary, held out in their backlands village of Canudos against the whole power of the Brazilian Government. It took four military expeditions to crush their fanatically heroic resistance.

The incident is an historical one, typical of many which have taken place in the remoter parts of Latin America—Cunningham-Graham's *Progress* records a similar revolt in a Mexico village—and it is described by a man who was an eye-witness of the later stages of the campaign. Yet it is written with such a clear insight into the psychological sources of the conflict, and such an imaginative realisation of the natural and human forces involved, that it outstrips mere reporting and takes on all the qualities of creative fiction. Da Cunha succeeded in synthesising all the particular details and incidents of this brutal episode into a pattern that has a human universality. The revolt itself dominates the book as little as the actual incidents of, say, *Pentamara* or *War and Peace;* it is the framework on which da Cunha built the finest piece of imaginative writing that has so far emerged from South America.

There are parts of this book which many readers will find annoying—da Cunha subscribed to a half-baked nineteenth-century theory of racialism—but the evocative power of the writing is immense (it seems to lose little in Samuel Putnam's translation) and the terrible evils of this war without mercy are depicted with an intensity that makes it a veritable *Salammbô* of the modern world. *Revolt in the Backlands* has long been a recognised Brazilian classic (it first appeared in 1902) and has had a great influence on the development of the South American novel. This English translation should bring it a belated recognition here.

The regional novel affords many opportunities and as many pitfalls. Da Cunha uses it as a setting which throws up into greater brilliance the wider human issues involved. But regionalism can also descend into mere parochialism, where the novel becomes an involved pattern of local gossip and private jokes with little interest for the reader who does not belong to the particular literary village. Welsh writers, with a few exceptions, have been particularly prone to this kind of novel. Their stories become so involved with the minutiae of local colour, the eccentricities of dialect, the intrigues of chapel and Eisteddfod, that the main themes are submerged. *Off to Philadelphia in the Morning*, by Jack Jones, is a Welsh novel of this kind. It sets out to tell the life-story of Joseph Parry, the Welsh musician, and at the same time to trace the nineteenth-century development of the Welsh steelworks and the mining town, Merthyr Tydfil. The two themes are never properly balanced; the story of Parry is always being pushed aside by the mass of local newspaper chatter about changes in the home town, while the history of Merthyr is subordinated to a sentimental drama of the musician's life, just a little too much like a Welsh version of what Hollywood did to Strauss and Schubert, with art making good against a gloomy background of gantries and slag tips. With some pruning, *Off to Philadelphia in the Morning* might have been a good municipal history for local patriots. As a novel it is a disappointing successor to the author's two excellent excursions into autobiography.

Erskine Caldwell takes us to another stronghold of regional desperadoes, the deep South. *Georgia Boy* suffers from being neither fish nor flesh, neither a novel nor a collection of short stories. But there is much good red herring in this series of incidents in the life of a family of poor whites, seen through the eyes of a precociously observant small boy. There is no continuous narrative, and the main connecting links are the oddities of the leading characters—the fecklessness of Pa, with his ever-frustrated attempts at infidelity and his dubious money-making, the hard-bitten Puritan respectability of Ma, the long-sufferingly stupid patience of Handsome, the persecuted Negro servant boy. Individually, some of the tales, such as "The Day We Rang the Bell for Preacher Hanshaw," are very amusing. Others have a disturbing cruelty. In the end one is left with the feeling that the not-so-gallant South is becoming, in the hands of writers like Caldwell, just as moribund a convention as the gallant South was before it. Georgian chawbacons can outlive their welcome as easily as Kentucky colonels; it would be unfortunate if those Southern writers who are conscious of the social realities of their region were to become the habitués of another stereotyped environment.

Mr. Robert Payne, in *A Bear Coughs at the North Pole*, has written a novel which really seems—to an untravelled reader—to enter the spirit of contemporary Chinese life. A story of political intrigues in wartime Chungking is built around the phrase of an elderly philosopher: "Everything that moves, moves everything else. A bear coughing at the North Pole stirs the sands of the Sahara." The three principal characters in this modern Oriental tragedy of blood are Su-piao, a peasant displaced by the Japanese and forced into crime to earn his bread, Lavasu, a French bootlegger and opium-runner who has his fingers on half the crime-rings of the city, and Shaoyu, the modern Kuomintang official who is trying to rid Chungking of the nest of drug-sellers who are corrupting the administration and favour Japanese infiltration. *A Bear Coughs at the North Pole* is something of an Oriental thriller in the Graham Greene manner—although not the Graham Greene style. On a pattern of rapid action, of cruelty, treachery and insecurity, the moral conflicts grow up—the conflict between old Chinese concepts of non-activity and new ones of action, the conflict in Lavasu's mind when, having indirectly caused thousands of deaths through opium, he is attacked by an irrepressible conscience over a single direct killing. There is a freshness about the writing and characterisation that evokes the Chinese scene very vividly, while, for all the author's evident sympathy with the Chinese people, he has not attempted to minimise their internal divisions, the corruption of their ruling clique, the depressed ignorance of their poor folk, or the difficulty of reconciling Eastern and Western attitudes towards life.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

FACTS AND FABLES

The Natural History of Nonsense. By BERGEN EVANS. *Michael Joseph.* 12s. 6d.

Myths of War. By MARIE BONAPARTE. *Imago Publishing Co.* 10s. 6d.

These two authors make a most interesting contrast; they both tackle the problem of credulity, the first as a traditional rationalist still sanguine enough to believe in the sovereign power of facts and reason, the second as a Freudian who

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knows that to be reasonable is not always to be right. Mr. Bergen Evans is an American who has collected a wide assortment of popular fallacies, superstitions and beliefs in order to pepper them with a rather heavy irony. His approach would have been less unacceptable if he had omitted the extremes. Fundamentalists and flat-earthers are by now a stale joke; while Racialism and Anti-semitism are not comic subjects. From the territory between these, however, he has assembled some amusing examples of beliefs which persist in defiance of the facts. That quicksands have a sucking force which pulls down their victims; that bulls are infuriated by anything red; that thunder sours milk; that ostriches hide their heads in the sand; that eunuchs cannot have sexual relations; that you should feed a cold and starve a fever; that rats leave sinking ships; that the hair and finger nails continue to grow after death; that oysters are poisonous in a month without an "r" in it; that fish is good for the brain; that if you hold your breath a nettle will not sting you; these are some of the beliefs (attributable, mostly, to nannies and early reading) which I found that I held and which, if Mr. Evans is to be relied on, are not justified by the facts. Other readers could make for themselves a different list, equally long.

In the ordinary run of life, of course, it doesn't matter tuppence whether or not one believes such things as these; but the deep-rooted beliefs on which popular attitude towards Racialism, Anti-Semitism and War rest are highly combustible material; they have to be taken seriously by those who are concerned about the future of our species. Here rationalists of the school of Mr. Evans seem to me to be a danger. It was only natural that rationalism in its first impact should have seemed to have provided the one instrument for human improvement, but those who still hold that view are, I would suggest, themselves the victims of a vulgar error. For more than two centuries they have "reasoned" in the hope that, if facts were opposed to fancies, the fancies would in the end disperse. This rational creed has proved to be no less fallacious than the irrational beliefs it sought to oppose. The mass of people continue, as Mr. Evans himself demonstrates, to believe the things they want to believe, however fabulous the facts prove them. Instead of asking himself whether it may not be that his approach or his premises are at fault, the rationalist stubbornly clings to his belief that, if only people would learn to be as reasonable as he, the world might yet be saved.

In its most vulgar form this error has degenerated into a belief that the fact is omnipotent. It is not—and not only because to-day's fact may be to-morrow's fable, and yesterday's fable sometimes turn out to be to-day's fact. More, the areas in which mere fact counts as an effective agent only overlap the fringes of human behaviour. It is as much use Mr. Evans proving to a bigoted Southerner that a negro does not smell and has a brain as large as a white man's, as it is Mr. Bevin assuring Mr. Molotov that our policy in Bulgaria, say, is disinterested. Either may be true in fact. But what has to be dealt with, if conviction is the aim, is not the truth of a proposition but the will of a person to believe. Rationalists seldom admit that logic is only a very partially effective instrument: they treat credulity as if it were a passive position that can be altered with a push, when really it is an appetite, a hunger, with a logic all its own. Those who hope to change the human condition would be better employed in trying to understand the sources of this hunger than in hectoring the hungry. Mr. Evans gives himself away, if by nothing else, by his tone, which betrays a brash and self-righteous superiority in being right. This is a trait not uncommon among latter-day rationalists (there are some admirers of *This England* who derive the same sort of ignoble satisfaction from that column).

Some hints of how these problems will have to be tackled in the future are given by the Princess Bonaparte, who has also made a collection of fables, in this case fables which gained currency during the late war. Being a psycho-analyst, as well as a rationalist, she approaches her subject in a soberer temper than Mr. Evans, and the result is far more illuminating. Take, for example, her first story, The Myth of the Corpse in the Car. A young man, just called up, gives a lift to a woman who prophesies the death of Hitler within six months. As she gets out at her destination she advises him not to continue his journey: if he does, he will find a dead man in his car. Thinking her dotty, he takes no notice, but later in his journey he gives a second lift, this time to a man, and sure enough, on arrival, the man is found to be dead. This story, which cropped up in many versions at the beginning of the war, is credible because people were hungry to believe that the war would be over in six months: the more remote prophecy seemed to be reinforced by the success of the nearer. There *was* a corpse, so Hitler *would* die. Yet this is only the merest surface of an explanation. Why, in all the versions, the analyst next asks, should the pledge demanded be a dead man? Anything less dramatic would have done. The inquiry into this, long, arduous and difficult, carries us back to *The Golden Bough*, linking with ancient beliefs in the virtue of human sacrifice. And why, in all the versions of the stories, a car? This inquiry carries us forward to Freud:

> Only, psycho-analysis, expert in deciphering symbols, would enable us to understand why the sacrifice so frequently takes place in a car, however strange may seem its interpretation to laymen.

There are many other fascinating myths similarly treated in this book. Interesting, because it shows the positive side, is the widespread belief that Army food or drink was doctored with anaphrodisiacs; this myth became current just because young men wanted to find a rational explanation for the diminution in sexual potency they often experienced as recruits. The true explanation must be looked for far back in the waste places of the unconscious which still jealously preserves against all rationality ancient rituals and customs—some of them still, like this one, serving a useful purpose; for rituals and beliefs are not necessarily ridiculous simply because they are old (another vulgar rationalist error).

It will be argued by some of the hard-headed that the credulity of the average man is equalled only by the credulity of those who can swallow Freud. Enthusiastic amateurs have certainly made the pill more difficult to take. The Princess Bonaparte is not an amateur: she is a trained analyst and so she is reasonably modest in her claims for the analytic approach; it is only one of the techniques which have to be applied to exorcise dangerous credulities. But by its very nature it is the one which the dogmatic rationalist may find it most difficult to learn and to apply.

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Gill's whole purpose as a pamphleteer was to emphasise the principle contained in that quotation. He saw in it a recognition of all that has

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gone wrong in the play of aesthetics in human life; and in his analysis of that error he has had to state afresh, with an emphasis tending to crankish over-simplification, his own definition of art. "Art is skill," he says in one place, "that is what it has always been and what it has always been said to be. But it is a deliberate skill; and a work of art is the product of voluntary acts directed towards working." Later he adds, "art is simply the business of making things, anything and everything." Finally, after a discussion of the influence of both industrialism and commercialism upon art as he has thus defined it, he makes the qualification upon which he bases the whole comminatory attack upon present-day society: "before modern machine industrialism, art used to be the expression of the mind of the whole people. Now it is the expression of the minds of a few eccentric people."

I mentioned his over-simplification of the problem of our aesthetic troubles. He had much justification for it. Many people, though they be not zealous converts, will agree with Gill in lamenting the degradation in design and quality as between handmade goods and mass-produced machine-made goods. Will they not lament, with Gill, the decay of craftsmanship and the guild-spirit, and the disappearance of the all-round artisan since the rise of the factory system and all the impersonal diffusion of labour?

Gill blames the bankers, and of course the Reformation which gave a sanction to usury. It may be true, but we can suspect that the cause of the decay is both deeper and more superficial than that: deeper, because seated in the fallibility of human nature itself; more superficial, because of the stresses and strains put upon hand-skills (with their personal art) by the comparatively sudden influence of machine-skills (with their diffused, communal art) into the technique of daily life.

The complications, the false economic stresses and gaps, caused through over-production by the machines, the growth of big business with centralised control and standardisation of output; these are matters that a stricken world is still trying to diagnose. Meanwhile Gill, and those who follow him, have tended to simplify the analysis by localising the evil picturesquely.

The banker's world, "which we have made or by which we are held prisoners, is a monstrosity, a disease, a product of sin. In that world all things are made for sale. Labour itself (and that is to say, Prayer; for to labour is to pray) is a commodity to be bought or sold. In such a world we may offer ourselves as burnt offerings, but we cannot offer praises, we cannot praise God in our works."

One's instinct is to acknowledge the truth of such a statement about the evils of our time. Most of us feel that money-power is one of the most cruel of the tyrannies that have degraded the integrity of individual man. We see it as the principal weapon of Totalitarianism, and the new regime of slavery threatening us to-day.

Gill amplifies this argument, and with Ruskinian illustration poses the conflict so that it may be brought to an issue. On the satanic side of the banks and big business he sets Communism and Fascism which propose to destroy the dignity of labour, and personal responsibility. On the side of God he sets hand-craftsmanship and the small workshop, which ensure that dignity and responsibility.

The first step to the decentralisation (Mr. Herbert Read's Anarchism) is to be the seizure by the workers of the control of Big Business. Then they must decide if it is to be deemed worth the sacrifice of individual pride and pleasure in work, which its technique has brought about.

Beyond that Gill does not go. But he infers much more by his ironic dialectic. His taste is austere, even mystical, based upon the Franciscan illumination of the idea of Poverty as a positive condition of grace. Had this strongly individual artist lived to see post-war Europe, with its total impoverishment, he might have rejoiced in the purgation through which we are passing. On the other hand, such an agin-the-Government temperament might have seen in our efforts to cure the evils purely by economic experiments only one more sign of the coming damnation of a society blind to spiritual realities. Whether or not Gill was right, we may be sure that evils which the Catholic Church has failed to remedy during the last two thousand years will not be cured by economists in one or two decades.

RICHARD CHURCH

Rossetti, Dante and Ourselves. NICOLETTE GRAY. *Faber and Faber.* 8s. 6d.

The starting-point of this brief essay—it does not claim to be more—is the observation of T. S. Eliot that the "Pre-Raphaelite tapestry" obscured from him the true meaning of Dante. Miss Gray argues that Dante does in fact find in Rossetti a far from satisfactory interpreter: he fails to grasp medieval thought, as may be seen here and there in his translation of the *Vita Nuova;* and he has not the older poet's philosophical conception of love. When he paints Paolo and Francesca he conveys the idea that they have no business in Hell. The opening of the gulf between medieval and modern occurred, of course, at the time of the Reformation; from then on the notion of world order gave ground, and there was a steady influx of anarchy not necessarily worse than the order it replaced, but different. (Miss Gray ascribes a large part of the change in the educated English mind to Shakespeare; this, though incidental, is one of her best-made points.) Rossetti and the romantic painters tried to restore validity to the image by weighting it with allusion. But neither they nor their successors have found a substitute for the idea of truth. All this is expressed in clear terms.

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Week-end Competitions

No. 916

Set by Thomas Anthony

In the interval at the Covent Garden Ballet, my wife added greatly to the evening by finding a lady reading a French paper with the headline:—

PRENEZ GARDE AUX FAUX BOY-SCOUTS
ET MÉFIEZ-VOUS DES POÈTES INCONNUS.

A prize of six guineas is offered for an account in Voltairsean French prose of how Candide ignored these obvious dangers, and of the deplorable results. (Maximum 200 words.) Entries by September 23.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 913

Set by W.R.

Six guineas are offered for the best poems in 10 lines or less upon the discovery of a long-forgotten toy from one's childhood, e.g. a doll's house or a diabolo.

Report by W.R.

An enormous number of entries, and I found even the least skilful of them moving, for the memory of

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childhood happinesses is so justly prized that it restores to the word "sentimental" its original and laudatory meaning. The teddy-bear has proved enormously the most popular toy, soldiers coming second. Other choices included the doll's house and diabolo I gave as examples, snowstorms, golliwogs, bricks, Happy Families, kaleidoscopes, shells, boats, trumpets, Jack-in-the-Boxes, solitaires, spades, trumpets, cookers, catapults, scooters, a violin, tops, hoops, trains, yo-yos, balls, marbles, a sandmill, a drum, a cigarette-album, daggers, pistols, skipping-ropes, a roundabout, a bat, dice, skates, a magic lantern, horses, rabbits, a snake and an elephant. I recommend ten shillings for each entry printed.

Over the motor-house the loft
(Mind the ladder's missing rungs)
Harbours in tide-mark drift
Unwanted, odd, forgotten things.
In this trunk's dusty lee careens
The ship a childish hand essayed
And never launched. Her lines
How crude!—yet this botched piece of wood
Bore the child's mind on Ocean voyages far.
Once again I sailed with her. R. J. P. HEWISON

TO TOBY: A LIFE-SIZE PUG

I first knew Roundness from your shiny head,
I first knew Smoothness from your satin skin,
And when I chipped your toe and went to bed,
I first knew Sin.
That flattened nose, that frown, those goggle eyes,
That pink bow that we called your "sugar cake,"
And those blue-mottled haunches did I prize
For old sake's sake?
No. When from attic bundles we unrolled you
My best-beloved cried "Hideous"—and sold you.
L.E.J.

On this small drum I used to beat
Time to a hero's marching feet:
I hear it yet,
Now as a memory to clutch
Fiercely the heart, amid so much
That I forget;
With these same eyes I see before
The mounting treachery of war;
I see the mournful cypress wave
Over the drummer at your grave.
TERENCE MELICAN

PHASELLUS ILLE, QUEM VIDETIS, HOSPITES . . .

This little yacht you look upon
was once the swiftest of her class.
No vessel sailed on pond or pool
she could not catch and pass.
How gracefully with mast erect
she glided clean across the lake,
or leaning sweetly from the breeze
she trailed a crescent wake.
I was a boy then—should one try
a coat of paint—?
No, let her lie. QUINTUS

Through the dim greenish glass
The child's still gaze would pass
And magnify the red-cloaked people,
The Church with pin-point steeple,
Thus like black feathers—

God of the weathers,
The child's delighted hand would make
A swirling snow-storm with a shake.
But now, the snow must lie,
The globe is cracked and dry. D. H.

My Noah's Ark when I was nine!
The painted kine that cropped no hay,
No moo, no bark, no grunt, no neigh.
And yet to me far more alive
Than any I've a chance to see
To-day. Ah me!
Dear, docile beasts divinely dumb:
Since then worse things from Nuremberg have come. WILLY TADPOLE

One at each end, two underneath,
And two on top astraddle,
We used to ride that rocking horse,
Devoid of rein or saddle,
Singing our riding song, whose words
(I cannot now recall them)
Awoke our steed to feats of speed,
And oh! how we did bawl them.
H. C. M.

Oh Bruin! Best of teddy bears,
A present once from Mother,
One crumpled ear, devoid of hairs,
Much shorter than the other,
Where Leslie threw you down the stairs—
So very like a brother.
Deaf ears were turned to all my prayers
He should buy you another.
I'll nurse no more this grudge of forty years
If my verse, but not his, this week appears.
JOYCE JOHNSON

My little spade, my confidant,
With you, in dreams, my friend and slave,
I'd kill my father and my aunt
And after, dig their grave.
Or, on the beach, calm, clean and bland,
How nicely with my spade I'd play,
Writing and drawing on the sand
The WORD I must not say.

Mrs. Burgess, here's a toy
That may please your little boy. HAUT BRION

"And here" they said "the Play-room, and of course
A Friend of your's, old Jack, the Rocking-Horse!"
I had forgotten, but remembered then,
A gift to this same School in nineteen-ten.
Dear Friend of happy winters! That glass eye,
Those dapple-painted limbs that leapt so high,
That long white tail (detachable, for Charades
So fine a wig!)—what minstrels and what bards
Could voice our rapture when we saw you first
That Christmas Eve into our Nursery burst!
SILVIA TATHAM

COCKLE-SHELL

A silver boat upon an Xmas tree—
Can such a fragile toy hold ecstasy?
Yet, it is strange,
I, who at five years old knew naught of lust,
Became a Maenad: have this thing I *must*.

Now, in my hand, tarnished and old, it lies
Fragrant with magic, and a faint surprise:
We do not change:
The triumph of possession, the sharp thrill
After how many years? is with me still.
VIVIEN BULKLEY

THE RULING PASSION

Wrapped in pink paper, hid in the old Doll's House
What's this I wonder?—Ah! a clockwork mouse,
It's tiny spring and wheels laid loose beside . . .
Yes!—I remember how I had to hide
That corpse I could not bring to life again;
I felt like Eugene Aram—or like Cain!

Eager for knowledge at the age of seven,
I'm curious still, past three score years and ten.
My works will soon be scattered,—and what then?
Sleep in the Churchyard—or awake in Heaven?
WILLIAM BLISS

Out-tumbled from the attic chest it lay,
Its wires grown rusty and its beads half gone,
The abacus my father gave his son:
Victorian toy, designed for work or play.

Dealing in futures—the paternal plan—
He saw me, purse-proud, in the moneyed throng;
But Fate just smiled, and moved the beads along
To reach my sum: a literary man! TOWANBUCKET

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CAMBRIDGESHIRE Educ. Cttee. Cambridgeshire Technical College and School of Art. Appointment of Principal. Applicants should be graduates in Hons. of a British University, or possess an equiv. qualification. The scope of the College, which is the centre of adult education in Cambridge and district, is both humane and vocational, and there are canteens, games and common rooms with a Club Supervisor. Salary £1,200×£50—£1,350. Beginning salary in accordance with exp. and qualifics. A form of application, which must be returned by Sept. 30, 1947, together with a prospectus of the College, will be sent on receipt of a stamped add. env. by the Chief Education Officer (T), Shire Hall, Cambridge.

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KENSINGTON Town Hall.—Season of Int. Films. Oct. 1, "Portrait of Maria," "Brief Encounter," No. 5, "Man of Aran," "La Bete Humaine." Partics.: Sec., 14 Forty Lane, Wembley.

RIALTO—Open City (A). Eng. subtitles. Progs. begin 12.5, 2.45, 5.20, 8 p.m. Suns. 4.30 and 7.15.

SADLER'S Wells, Ter. 1672. Opera and Ballet season. Evgs. at 7. Mat. Sats. 2.30. Progr. available at Box Office (post 1d.).

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KEVA Goff, song recital, first London appearance of the American soprano. Wigmore Hall, Tues., Sept. 16, at 7 p.m. Lynford-Joel, 17 Cavendish Sq. W.1.

ONLY Concert Performance in London. The Anglo-Austrian Music Society present Vienna State Opera with Vienna State Opera Orchestra. Conductors: Jos. Krips and Clemens Krauss. Charity Concert, Sunday, 21st Sept., at 7.30 p.m. Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in aid of "Austrian Children in need," etc. Prog. incl.: Mozart and Joh. Strauss. 42s. to 3s. 6d. by post only, from box office or Sec., 28 Orsett Terrace, W.2, and Agents.

BRAHMS-Schubert. Commemoration 1947. Organised by the B.B.C. Central Hall, Westminster. Artur Schnabel, Joseph Szigeti, William Primrose, Pierre Fournier, Ernest Element (violin), James Merrett (double-bass). Six subscription concerts, Sept. 22, 24, 26, 29; Oct. 1, 3, at 8. Subscription 62s. 6d., 52s. 6d., 37s. 6d., 25s., 15s. Single: 12s. 6d., 10s. 6d., 7s. 6d., 5s., 3s., and programme details from Ibbs and Tillett, Ltd., 124 Wigmore St. W.1 (Wel. 8418), Hall (Whi. 4259) and Agents.

LONDON International Trio. Works by Mozart, Martinu, Copland, Fischer, etc. Wigmore Hall, Thur., Sept. 18, at 7. 3s., 6s., 9s. Hall and Agents. Presented by Wilfred Van Wyck.

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MARLOWE Galleries, 40 Elizabeth St., S.W.1. Watercolours of Provence, by Lucien Jacques. Mon.-Fri. 10-5. Sept. 8-20.

GIMPEL Fils, 84 Duke St. Grosvenor Sq. W.1. May. 3720. Paintings by Pic. Sept. 17-Oct. 18.

SETTINGS for Pictures. A display of Pictures in settings of antique and modern furnishing. Heal's, 196, Tottenham Court Road, W.1.

INDIA in Photographs. Exhibition under auspices of the Public Relations Dept. of Office of the High Commissioner for India. Held at India House, Aldwych, W.C.2, weekdays 10-6. Sats. 10-1. Adm. free.

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EXHIBITION to mark Moscow's 800th anniversary; photographs, books, prints, etc., at Friendship House, 15 Devonshire St. W.1, from Sept. 8 to Oct. 4. Weekdays 10-8. Admission free.

RECENTLY arrived from the Continent. Colour Reproductions of Cezanne, Monet, Rousseau, Braque, etc. Phœnix Gallery, 38 William IV St. Charing Cross, W.C.2. Mon.-Fri. 9.30-6.

Lectures and Meetings

"SOURCE of Occult Knowledge." Mrs. Josephine Ransom. Sunday, Sept. 14, 7. Theosophical Society, 50 Gloucester Pl. W.1.

Lectures and Meetings—continued

SPEECH Fellowship Monthly Meetings. Sats. at 2.30 p.m. Opening meeting of autumn session September 20. Partics. from Secretary, Speech Fellowship, 1 Park Crescent, W.1. Tel. Welbeck 9269, Ext. 3.

SOVIET Union & World Affairs. Question and Answer Meeting, 7.30, Mon., Sept. 15, Conway Hall, Holborn. Reg Bishop, Pat Sloan, Rev. Stanley Evans. Res. tkts. 1s., from British-Soviet Soc., 15 Devonshire St. W.1.

SOUTH Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. W.C.1. Sunday meetings at 11. September 14: S. K. Ratcliffe, "The Passing of British India."

INSTITUTE for Experimental Metaphysics, Ltd. (Psychic Investigation), Walton House, Walton St. S.W.3. Ken. 6865. Sept. 18, at 6 p.m. Lecture: "The Need for Caution in Psychical Investigation." By Dr. West, Research Officer of the Society for Psychical Research. Members 1s., non-members 2s. 6d. Sept. 23, at 6.30 p.m. Experimental Direct Voice Sitting, with William Roy. Members 17s. 6d., non-members 1 guinea. Seats bookable in advance.

HAMPSTEAD Fabian Society, meeting at the Vienna Cafe, 289 Finchley Rd. Sept. 18, at 8 p.m. Spkr.: R. G. Forrester, F.S.S., on "Science and the Economic Situation."

PERSONALIST Group. Dr. M. Nothmann on "Freedom, Necessity and Responsibility." Mon., Sept. 15, 7.30 p.m., at 8 Endsleigh Gardens, W.C.1.

"MY Three Years in Moscow," Lecture by Charles Ashleigh, on Sept. 16, 7.30. Friendship House, 15 Devonshire St. W.1.

"SOVIET Science," lecture by Dr. W. Wooster, on Fri., Sept. 19, at 7.30. Friendship House, 15 Devonshire St. W.1.

A.I.A. Centre, 15 Lisle St. Leicester Sq. Wed., Sept. 17, 7.30. John Hutton on "Mural Painting."

HAMPSTEAD Left Book Club. Sept. 24, 8 p.m. 1 Broadhurst Gdns. Geo. Thomas M.P., "Poland & Greece To-day." Ch.: A. Greenwood M.P. (Nr. Finchley Rd. Met.)

HAMPSTEAD Left Book Club Open Ramble. Sept. 21, Marylebone Stn., Platform 1. 10 a.m. to Amersham. All welcome.

RECEPTION to Harold Laski. London Fabians. Tues., Sept. 23, 6.30. London School of Econs., W.C.2. Tkts. 3s. 6d. incl.

Lecture Courses and Specialised Training

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COLD WAR AT FLUSHING MEADOWS

THE Second Assembly of the United Nations is faced with an agenda of 62 items and one overriding problem. Will the machinery which has to deal with the future of Palestine, the Franco regime in Spain and the complex undertakings of disarmament and atomic energy control be thrown finally out of gear by the threatened clash between the two Great Powers—the United States and the U.S.S.R.? The issues on which such a clash is likely are the threat to Royalist Greece from the Slav Bloc; pressure on Iran by the U.S.S.R. in quest of additional supplies of oil to augment her own inadequate production; and the uneasy partition of Korea.

The Iranian situation is not yet formally on the Assembly's agenda; but, whether or not he intends to parade at Flushing Meadows this new instance of Russia's "aggression," Mr. Marshall has made it clear that he intends to conduct a diplomatic offensive against the U.S.S.R. on all fronts, and that he will concentrate, first of all, on the vexed northern borders of Greece. By repeatedly invoking the veto, Mr. Gromyko has prevented the Security Council's inviting the Assembly to take cognizance of the Greek situation; but there is every reason to suppose that the United States delegation will force matters to a head in the Assembly, where it can command a majority, and to secure the passage of a recommendation either approving American intervention in Greece or, failing that, merely condemning the attitude of the U.S.S.R.'s Balkan satellites, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania. Mr. Marshall has asked for the establishment of a Standing Committee of the Assembly on "peace and security," whose voting would not be subject to the Big Power veto. That would be confined in future to questions of economic or military action. The Committee's recommendations, however, would give "moral authority" to the Truman Doctrine in Greece.

Argentina is credited with the intention of moving a resolution calling for a revision of the Charter and the deletion of the unanimity rule in the Security Council. The resolution will doubtless be supported by Australia in the name of the Small Powers, but its endorsement by the United States is improbable: quite apart from the Senate's traditional reluctance to surrender any of its policy-making powers, the U.S. Administration, if it came to the point, would be just as determined to use the veto in defence of American interests in the Pacific as the U.S.S.R. is to protect her *glacis* in Eastern Europe. What is more likely is that Mr. Marshall will exploit the resentment felt by the Small Powers at the indiscriminate use of the veto by Russia as an additional argument for persuading the Assembly to declare that—in Greece, in Persia and in every other issue that may arise—Russia and her associates are in the wrong. The Slav Bloc will then be isolated.

That the retort of the U.S.S.R. to these tactics will be to secede from the United Nations is unlikely. If the Russians, with their use of the veto, have done their best to prevent the machinery of the Security Council from working, it is because they have come increasingly to regard the machinery of the United Nations as the agency of American domination. This, if they left the United Nations, it would undoubtedly become; and the Russians can hardly wish to accelerate the process. The more imminent danger is that since Flushing Meadows is becoming the terrain for unlimited waging of "cold war" between the United States and the U.S.S.R., there will be increasing pressure on all other member States—Middle Powers and Small Powers alike—to take sides.

If that be the tendency of this session of the Assembly, a great responsibility falls on Britain and France. So long as they refuse to join with the United States in a line-up against the U.S.S.R., the (otherwise irrevocable) division of mankind into two rival groups whose friction is almost bound to end in a third world war will not be complete. The best chance that exists of preventing the present Big Power clash coming to a head in war is that Britain and France and other like-minded nations, who seek no quarrel either with the U.S.S.R. or with the U.S.A., should make it clear that they are determined to preserve their independence of judgment.

The Politics of Persian Oil

The issue in Iran is complicated by the fact that there is a patent divergence of opinion, as between Mr. Marshall and Mr. Bevin, not so much on the merits of existing Western policy towards Russian ambitions in the undeveloped North Persian oilfields, as on the practical question: what can Britain do about it? The 1946 agreement between Iran and the Soviet Union, providing for the exploitation of North Persian oil by a joint corporation in which the U.S.S.R. would hold fifty-one per cent. of the interest, has never been ratified by the Government in Teheran. The Persian Prime Minister, Qawames-Sultani, has so far succeeded in "stalling" adroitly—with an eye no doubt to State Department favours—and the indications now are that the Majlis, to whom the agreement is at last to be presented for ratification, will refuse to endorse it. Reports that the British Ambassador in Teheran has advised the Prime Minister in those circumstances to "renew negotiations with the Russians" have been denied by Qawam; but, however the advice may have been phrased, there is good reason to believe that Qawam was warned against placing any reliance on British military assistance if Moscow, regarding non-ratification of the oil agreement as a hostile act, grew tough. This, say the Americans, was inexcusable weakness on Britain's part. We disagree. The Americans are perfectly well aware that the North Persian oilfields are geographically so situated that they cannot be developed economically by anybody except the Russians, and that the U.S.S.R. is the natural market for the oil. The American desire is not to exploit the oil but simply to deny its use to the Soviet Union; and, in pursuance of this policy, they demand, in effect, that the British garrison in the Middle East shall be used, at need, to block the road from the U.S.S.R. into Northern Persia—a function it is militarily quite incapable of fulfilling. On this